IT WAS THE FINEST KIND OF EXCITEMENT, OUR RUNNING TO HARBOR

THE SEINERS

BY

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"JEB HUTTON," ETC.

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THE SEINERS

The Seiners

I

THE NEW VESSEL OF WITHROW'S

IT was only a few days before this that the new vessel of Mr. Withrow's, built by him, as everybody supposed, for Maurice Blake, had been towed around from Essex, and I remember how Maurice stood on the dock that afternoon and looked her over.

There was not a bolt or a plank or a seam in her whole hull, not a square inch inside or out, that he had not been over half a dozen times while she was on the stocks; but now he had to look her over again, and as he looked his eyes took on a shine. She had been designed by a man famous the world over, and was intended to beat anything that ever sailed past Eastern Point.

She certainly was a great-looking model of a vessel, and "If she only sails and handles half so well as she looks, she'll do for me," said Maurice. "Yes, sir, and if she's up to what I think she ought to be, I wouldn't be afraid to bet my share of what

we make out South that she'll hold her own with anything out of Gloucester—give her a few weeks to loosen up, of course."

That was a good deal to say, for it was a great fleet of vessels sailing out of Gloucester; but even so, even allowing for a young skipper's pride in his first crack vessel, it meant a whole lot coming like that from Maurice Blake.

And on top of all that Maurice and Withrow had to quarrel, though what about I never found out. I only know that I was ready to believe that Withrow was to blame, for I liked Maurice and did not like Withrow, even though Withrow was the man from whom I drew my pay every week. And yet I could not understand it, for Maurice Blake had been far and away the most successful skipper sailing for Withrow, and Withrow always had a good eye for the dollar.

No more came of it until this particular morning, some days after Maurice and Withrow had quarrelled. Wesley Marrs and Tommie Clancy, two men that I never tired of listening to, were on the dock and sizing up the new vessel. Wesley Marrs was himself a great fisherman, and master at this time of the wonderful Lucy Foster.

When she swings the main boom over
And she feels the wind abaft,

The way she'll walk to Gloucester'll
Make a steamer look a raft.

For she's the Lucy Foster,
She's a seiner out of Gloucester,—

was the way the fishermen of the port used to sing about the Lucy; while Tommie Clancy was Maurice Blake's closest friend.

With ballast stored, masts stepped, rigging set up, and sails bent, setting as sweet as could be to her lines and the lumpers beginning to get her ready for the mackerel season, the Fred Withrow was certainly a picture.

After a couple of extra long pulls, blowing the smoke into the air, and another look above and below, "That one—she'll sail some or I don't know," said Wesley.

"She sure will," said Tommie; "and it's a jeesly shame Maurice isn't to have her." Then turning to me, "What in the devil's name ails that man you work for, Joey?"

I said I didn't know.

"No, nor nobody else knows. I'd like to work in that store for him for about ten minutes. I think I'd make him say something in that ten minutes that would give me a good excuse for heaving him out the window. He had an argument with Maurice, Wesley, and Maurice don't

know what it was half about, but he knows he came near to punching Withrow."

And Wesley and Tommie had to talk that out; and between the pair of them, thinking of what they said, I thought I ought to walk back to the store with barely a civil look for my employer, who didn't like that at all, for he generally wanted to hand out the black looks himself.

Then the girls—my cousin Nellie and her particular chum, Alice Foster—came in to weigh themselves, and also to remind me, they said, that I was to take them over to Essex the next day for the launching of the new vessel for the Duncan firm, which had been designed by a friend of Nell's, a young fellow named Will Somers, who was just beginning to get a name in Gloucester for fast and able models of vessels. Withrow, who was not over-liberal with his holidays, said I might go—mostly, I suspect, because Alice Foster had said she would not make the trip without Nell, and Nell would not go unless I went too.

Then Nell and Miss Foster went on with the business of weighing themselves. That was in line with the latest fad. It was always something or other, and physical culture was in the air at this time with every other girl in Gloucester, so far as I could see—either Indian-club swinging or dumb-bell drilling, long walks, and things of

that kind, and telling how much better they felt after it. My cousin Nell, who went in for anything that anybody ever told her about, was trying to reduce her weight. According to some perfect-form charts, or something or other on printed sheets, she weighed seven pounds more than she should for her height. I thought she was about the right weight myself, and told her so, but she said no—she was positively fat. "Look at Alice," she said, "she's just the thing."

I looked at Alice—Miss Foster I always called her myself—and certainly she was a lovely girl, though perhaps a little too conscious of it. She was one of the few that weren't going in for anything that I could see. She wasn't even weighing herself, or at least she didn't until Mr. Withrow, with his company manners in fine working order, asked her if she wouldn't allow him to weigh her.

There were people in town who said it was not for nothing that Alice Foster was so chummy with my cousin Nell. They meant, of course, that being chummy with Nell, who came down regularly to see me, gave herself a good excuse to come along and so have a word with Withrow. Fred Withrow himself was a big, well-built, handsome man—an unusually good-looking man, I'd call him—and a great heart-breaker, according to report—some of it his own. And he was wealthy,

too. I did not know, but somehow or other I did not believe it, or maybe it was that I hoped rather than believed that Miss Foster did not care particularly for him; for I did not like him myself, although I worked for him and was taking his money. Being day in and day out with him in the store, you see I saw him pretty much as he really was, and I hated to think of a fine girl—for with all her cool ways I knew Miss Foster was that—marrying him. Just how Withrow thought he stood with Miss Foster I did not know—he was a pretty close-mouthed man when he wanted to be. Miss Foster herself was that reserved kind of a girl that you cannot always place. She struck me as being a girl that would die before she would confess a weakness or a troublesome feeling. And yet, without knowing how it came there, there was always a notion in the back of my head that made me half-believe that she did not come to the store with my cousin out of pure companionship. There was something besides—and what could it be but Withrow?

After the weighing was done Nell asked me all at once, "I hear, Joe, that Captain Hollis is going to have your new vessel? How is that? We—I thought that Captain Blake was going master of her—and such a pretty vessel!"

I answered that I didn't know how it was, and

looked over at my employer, as much as to say, "Maybe he can tell you."

I think now that I must have been a pretty impudent lad, letting my employer know what I thought of him as I did in those days. I think, too, he had a pretty shrewd notion of what I thought of himself and Maurice Blake. At any rate, after the girls had gone, he worked himself into a fine bit of temper, and I talked back at him, and the end of it was that he discharged me—or I quit—I'm not sure which. I do know that it was rapid-fire talk while it lasted.

It was some satisfaction to me to tell Withrow just about what I did think of him before I went. He didn't quite throw me out of the door, although he was big enough for that; but he looked as if he wanted to. And maybe he would have, too, or tried it, only I said, "Mind I don't give you what Tommie Clancy threatened to give you once," and his nerve went flat. I couldn't have handled him as Clancy had any more than I could have hove a barrel of salt mackerel over my head, which was what the strong fishermen of the port were doing about that time to prove their strength; but the bluff went, and I couldn't help throwing out my chest as I went out the door and thinking that I was getting to be a great judge of human nature.

II

A LITTLE JOG ALONG THE DOCKS

I WAS sorry to lose my job. I was twenty years old, without a trade or special knowledge of any kind, and beyond the outfitting of fishing vessels, knowing nothing of any business, and with no more than a high school education—and that two years behind me—and I knew of no place in Gloucester where I could begin all over and right away get as much pay as I had left behind me. I might go to Boston, of course, and try for something there—I was not ten minutes out of Withrow's before I thought of doing that. But a little further thought and I knew there were more capable men than I walking the streets of Boston looking for work. However, a lot could happen before I would have to worry, and so I decided to take the air and think it over.

I might go fishing certainly—I had had a little experience in my school vacations—if my mother would only stand for it. As to that I did not know. If it came to fishing or starving—one or the other—then of course she would have to let me go fishing. But my father had been lost on the

Grand Banks with his vessel and all hands—and then one brother was already fishing. So I hardly thought she would allow me, and anyway I knew she would never have a good night's rest while I was out.

However, I kept thinking it over. To get away by myself I took a ride over to Essex. There I knew I would find half a dozen vessels on the stocks, and there they were—the latest vessel for the Duncan firm and three more for other firms. I knew one of the ship-carpenters in Elwell's yard, Levi Woodbury, and he was telling me about some of the vessels that had been launched lately. "Of course," he said, "you saw the one launched a few days ago from here—that one built for Mr. Withrow?"

I said I had, and that she was a wonder to look at and that I wished Maurice Blake, and not Sam Hollis, was to have her.

"Yes," said Levi, "and a pity. Maurice Blake could have sailed her right, though for that matter Sam Hollis is a clever hand to sail a vessel, too. And she ought to sail some, that vessel. But look here at this one for the Duncans and to be launched to-morrow. Designed by Will Somers—know him? Yes? A nice young fellow. Ain't she able-looking?"

She certainly was, and handsome, and Levi went

on to tell me about her. He showed me where she was like and where she differed from the Lucy Foster, the Fred Withrow, the Nannie O, the Colleen Bawn, and the others which were then causing trouble in Gloucester with crews fighting over their good qualities. I did not know a whole lot about vessels, but having been born in Gloucester and having soaked in the atmosphere all my life and loving vessels besides, I had a lot of notions about them. And I liked this last Duncan vessel. By the wind and in a sea-way, it struck me she would be a wonder. There was something more than just the fine lines of her. There is that about vessels. You can take two vessels, model them alike, rig them alike, handle them alike, and still one will sail rings around the other. And why is it? I've heard a hundred fishermen at different times say that and then ask, Why is it? This one was awfully sharp forward, too sharp some might have said, with little more forefoot than most of the late-built flyers; but she was deep and had a quarter that I knew would stand up under her sail. I liked the after-part of her. Racing machines are all right for a few months or a year or two and in smooth water, but give me a vessel that can stand up under sail. I thought I could see where, if they gave her sail enough, especially aft, and a skipper that would drive her, she might do great

things. And certainly she ought to be a comfort in a blow and bring a fellow home—and there's a whole lot in that—being in a vessel that you feel will bring you home again.

I looked over the others, but none of them held me like the Duncan vessel, and I soon came back to Gloucester and took a walk along the water-front.

It was well into March at this time—the third week in March, I remember—and there was a great business doing along the docks. The salt bankers were almost ready to leave—twenty-eight or thirty sail fitting out for the Grand Banks. And then there were the seiners—the mackerel catchers—seventy or eighty sail of them making ready for the Southern cruise. All that meant that things would be humming for a while. So I took a walk along the docks to see it.

Most of the vessels that had been fishing during the winter had been stripped of their winter sails, and now aboard these they were bending on the summer suits and slinging up what top spars had not already been sent up. For the vessels that had been laid up all winter and stripped of everything, they were getting out the gear from the lofts. Everywhere it was topmasts being sent up, sails being dragged out, stays swayed taut, halyards and sheets rove—an overhauling generally.

On the railways—Burnham's, Parkhurst's, and Tarr's—were vessels having their bottoms scrubbed and painted and their topsides lined out. And they all looked so handsome and smelt so fine with their riggings being tarred, not with the smoky tar that people ashore put on house-roofs, but the fine rich-smelling tar that goes into vessels' rigging; and there was the black and dark sea-green paint for the sides, with the gold or yellow or sometimes red stripe to mark the run, and main and quarter rails being varnished.

And the seine-boats! If there is anything afloat that sets more easily on the water than a seine-boat I never saw it, unless it might be a birch-bark canoe—and who'd want to be caught out in a blow in a canoe? The seine-boats all looked as natural as so many sea-gulls—thirty-six or thirty-eight feet long, green or blue bottoms to just above the water-line so that it would show, and above that all clear white except for the blue or red or yellow or green decorations that some skippers liked. And the seines that went with them were coming in wagons from the net and twine factory, tanned brown or tarred black and all ready to be hauled on to the vessels' decks or stowed in the holds below, until the fleet should be in among the mackerel to the south'ard—off Hatteras or Cape May or somewhere down that way.

To feel all that and the rest of it—to walk to the tops of your shoes in pine chips in the spar yards, to measure the lengths of booms and gaffs for yourself if you weren't sure who were going to spread the big mainsails, to go up in the sail-lofts and see the sailmakers, bench after bench of them, making their needles and the long waxed threads fly through the canvas that it seemed a pity wasn't to stay so white forever—to see them spread the canvas out along the chalk lines on the varnished floor, fixing leach and luff ropes to them and putting the leather-bound cringles in, and putting them in too so they'd stay, for by and by men's lives would depend on the way they hung on—all that, railways, sail-lofts, vessels, boats, docks alive with men jumping to their work—skippers, crews, carpenters, riggers, lumpers, all thinking, talking, and, I suppose, dreaming of the season's work ahead—m-m—there was life for a man! Who'd want to work in a store after that?

I stopped at Duncan's wharf and looked at Wesley Marrs's vessel, the Lucy Foster, and then the Colleen Bawn.

And O'Donnell drove the Colleen like a ghost through all that gale,
And around 'twas roaring mountains and above 'twas blinding hail,

and so on. And the Nannie O, another vessel that fishermen sang songs about.

> Oh, the lovely Nannie O,
> The able Nannie O,
> The Nannie O a-drivin' through the gale.

They were lying there, tied to the docks. They were all dreams, so long and clean, with the beautiful sheer fore and aft, and the overhang of the racers they were meant to be—the gold run, with the grain of the varnished oak rails shining above the night-black of their topsides, and varnished spars. They had the look of vessels that could sail—and they could, and live out a gale—nothing like them afloat I'd heard people say that ought to know.

I walked along another stretch and at Withrow's dock I saw again the new one that had been built for Maurice Blake but given to Sam Hollis, who was a boon companion of Withrow's ashore, as I may have said already. Hollis's gang were bragging even now that she'd trim anything that ever sailed—the Lucy Foster, the Nannie O, the Colleen Bawn, and all the rest of them. And there were some old sharks, too, upon the docks who said they didn't know but she looked as if she could. But a lot of other people didn't think it—she was all right as a vessel, but Sam Hollis wasn't

a Wesley Marrs, nor a Tom O'Donnell, nor a Tommie Ohlsen, nor even a Maurice Blake, who was a much younger man and a less experienced fisherman than any of the others.

All that, with the vessels anchored in the stream and the little dories running up and down and in and out—it all brought back again the trips I'd made with my father, clear back to the time when I was a little boy, so small that in heavy weather he wouldn't trust me to go forward or aft myself, but would carry me in his arms himself—it all made me so long for the sea that my head went round and I found myself staggering like a drunken man as I tried to walk away from it.

III

MINNIE ARKELL

THERE was nothing for it. For a thousand dollars a month I could not stay ashore. Somebody or other would give me a chance to go seining, some good skipper I knew; and if none of the killers would give me a chance, then I'd try some old pod of a skipper. My mother would just have to let me go. It was only summer fishing after all—seining wasn't like winter trawling—and in the end she would see it as I did.

I walked along, and as the last man in my mind was Maurice Blake, of course he was the first I had to run into. He was not looking well; I mean he was not looking as he should have looked. There was a reckless manner about him that no more belonged to him than a regularly quiet manner belonged to his friend Tommie Clancy. And I guessed why—he had been drinking. I had heard it already. Generally when a man starts to drink for the first time everybody talks about it. I was suprised, and I wished he hadn't. But we are always finding out new things about men. In

my heart I was not blaming Maurice so much maybe as I should. I'd always been taught that drinking in excess was an awful habit, but some otherwise fine men I knew drank at times, and I wasn't going to blame Maurice till I knew more about it.

And we can forgive a lot, too, in those we like. Maurice had no family to think of, and it must have been a blow to him not to get so fine a vessel as the Fred Withrow after he had been promised and had set his heart on it. And then to see her go to a man like Sam Hollis! and with the prospect of not getting another until a man like Withrow felt like saying you could. Everybody in Gloucester seemed to know that Withrow was doing all he could to keep Maurice from getting a vessel, and as the owners had banded together just before this for protection, as they called it, "against outside interference," and as Withrow was one of the largest owners and a man of influence beyond his vessel holdings, he was quite a power at this time.

Maurice Blake was far from being drunk, however, when I met him this day. Indeed, I do not believe that in his most reckless hour up to this time he had ever lost control of himself so far as not to know pretty nearly what he was doing all the time; but certainly he had been drinking this day, and the drinking manner did not set well on him.

Maurice was standing on the front steps of Mrs. Arkell's boarding-house when I saw him. It was Mrs. Arkell's granddaughter Minnie that married the wealthy Mr. Miner—a rather loud sort of man, who had been reported as saying that he would give her a good time and show her life. He may have given her a good time—I don't know—but he was dead in two years. He was supposed to be very rich—three or four millions—but on settling up there was less than half a million. Of course that wasn't bad—enough for Minnie to buy a big house next her grandmother's for a summer home, and enough to go off travelling whenever she pleased.

When she came back to Gloucester she was still a very handsome girl, spoken of as the "Miner widow" among people who had known her only since her marriage, but still called Minnie Arkell by most of those who had known her when she was a child. In Gloucester she bought the first house just around the corner from her grandmother's. A handy passage between their two back yards allowed her to visit her grandmother whenever she pleased. She wanted to be near her own people, she said, and was more in her grandmother's house than her own.

Maurice came down the steps of Mrs. Arkell's boarding-house as I came along, and joined me on

the sidewalk. He asked me the first thing if I wouldn't have a drink, and I said no.

"Oh, I forgot," he said, "you don't drink. Have a cigar," and he pulled one out of his pocket, and I took and lit it. Generally I smoked a pipe, but I liked good cigars, though I couldn't afford them myself. This was not a good one—more like the kind they hand out in bar-rooms when men get tired of drinking and say they guess they'll have a smoke.

"How does it happen, Joe, you're not at the store? I always thought Withrow held his men pretty close to hours."

"Well, so he does, but I'm not working for him now." And then I told him that I had had an argument with Withrow, been discharged, and was thinking of going fishing. I didn't tell him at first how it all came about, but I think he guessed it, for all at once, after a searching look, he reached out and shook hands with me.

"If ever I get a vessel again, Joe, and you still want to go fishing and care for a chance with me, you can have it—if you can't go with a better man, I mean. I'll take you and be glad to have you."

That meant a good berth, of course, for Maurice was a killer.

I looked at Maurice when he wasn't watching me, and felt sorry for him. He was a man that

anybody would like the looks of. It wasn't that he was a handsome man—I never could get to like pretty men myself—but there was something about him that made you feel you could trust him. The heavy tan of his face and the grip of his jaw would spoil almost anybody for a beauty man, I suppose, but he had fine eyes and his mouth was all right, and he had a head that you'd like to stand off one side and look at, with hair that seemed to lift and wave with every breath of wind, and when he smiled you felt somehow that he'd saved that particular smile for you. He was no better built than a hundred other men I knew who were going fishing, and he was no bigger than a thousand others sailing out of Gloucester, and not near so big as a lot of others—five feet ten or eleven, maybe, he was, with level shoulders, and very light on his feet—but looking at him you knew he was all there.

After smoking a while and watching him between puffs, it flashed on me all at once that I was pretty thick. A word or two my cousin Nell had let slip—not so much what she said as the way she said it—gave me a hint of a whole lot of things. Looking at Maurice now I asked him if he had seen my cousin or Miss Foster lately.

He flushed up as he looked at me, and I saw that whatever he was thinking of it had not been

far away from what I had been thinking of. "No, I haven't seen them"—slowly. "How is your cousin?"

"Oh, she seems to be all right. They were both in to the store this morning."

"What doing?" I thought he was beginning to worry, but I tried not to let on that I noticed it. I was beginning to feel like a sleuth, or a detective, or a diplomat, or something.

"Well, I don't know. Nell said they came in to see me, but all that happened that I had any hand in was to weigh her. She gained another pound last week, and it's worrying her. The more exercise she takes the heavier she gets, she says. She's a hundred and thirty-one now. Of course, while they're there Withrow had to help out and make himself agreeable, especially to Miss Foster, but I can't see that she warms up to him."

"Ha? No? You don't think so?"

"Not much, but maybe it's her way. She's pretty frosty generally anyway, different from my cousin—she's something like."

"Yes, your cousin is all right," said Maurice.

"You bet," I said. "She don't stand around and chill the air."

"Why—does Miss Foster always? Is that her way? I—don't—know—much about her."

"Well, I don't know so very much myself—mostly what my cousin tells me. Still, I guess she's all right; but she strikes me as one of the kind that might make an awful lot of a man and never let on until she was dead sure of him."

"H-m— That means she could think a whole lot of Withrow and not let on, Joe?"

I tried to look at Maurice like my oldest brother used to look at me sometimes when he tried to make me feel that I was a very green kid indeed, and said, "Well, if she's the kind to care for a man like Withrow, all I've got to say is that she'll deserve all she'll get. He's no good."

"That may be, but how's she to know? I know, you know, and half the men in Gloucester know that he's rotten; but take a woman who only sees him at his best and when he's watching out—how's she to know?"

"I don't know, but being a woman she ought to," was all I could say to that. It came into my mind just then that when I next saw my cousin Nell I'd tell her what I really knew, and more than that—what I really thought of my old employer. Perhaps she'd carry it to Miss Foster. If it was to be Maurice or Withrow, I knew on which side I was going to be.

Both of us were quiet then, neither of us quite knowing what to say perhaps. Then together we

started to walk to the corner of the side street. We were past the side-door of the boarding-house when a voice called out, "Oh, Maurice," and then, maybe noticing me, I suppose, "Oh, Captain Blake," and Maurice turned. Minnie Arkell—Mrs. Miner rather—was there at the kitchen window. I didn't know she was in town at all—thought she hadn't got back from Florida, or North Carolina, or wherever it was she had been for the winter.

"Won't you come in a minute, Captain, and your friend? He doesn't remember me—do you, Joe?—and yet we were playmates once," which was true. I was often taken to Mrs. Arkell's when a little fellow by skippers who were friends of my father's. They used to tell me about him, and I liked to listen.

"I thought I'd run over and see granny," she went on. "I'm back to the old house for a while. Won't you come in?"

My mind had long been set against Minnie Arkell. I knew about her throwing over a fine young fellow, a promising skipper, to marry Miner. I may have been too young at the time to judge anybody, but after that I had small use for her. My ideas in the matter were of course pretty much what older men had put into me.

I had listened to them—skippers and others—and yet now, when she held out her hand to me and smiled, I didn't feel nearly so set against her. She certainly was a handsome girl, and yet I hoped that Maurice wouldn't fall in love with her, as most everybody did that came to the Arkell house.

I said that I did not have time to come in, and started to make off. Maurice asked me where I was bound. I told him that I thought of taking a look in at Crow's Nest and getting the news.

"Yes, you'll get it there, sure enough. When they can't tell you anything else up there they can tell you what everybody's doing." He smiled at that, turned slowly toward the side-door, as if he would rather go with me to Crow's Nest, and I went off.

Just outside the gate I saw Sam Hollis, a man I never did like. Tommie Clancy, the man that could size up a person quicker than anybody I'd ever met, used to say that deep down, if you could get at Hollis, you'd find a quitter, but that nobody had ever got into him. I'd been meeting Hollis after every trip in for two years in Withrow's store. He was a successful fisherman, and a sharp, keen man ashore, but he was a man I never quite took to. One of his ambitions, I felt satisfied, was to be reckoned a devil of a fellow. He'd have given a year's earnings, I knew, to have peo-

ple point him out on the street and say, "There's Sam Hollis—there's the boy to carry sail—nobody ever made him take his mains'l in," the same as they used to say of a half dozen or so that really would carry sail—that would drive a vessel under before they would be the first to reef. But the people didn't do that, although, let him tell it, he did wonderful things out to sea, and he had such a way of telling it, too, that he'd almost make you believe him. But as Clancy used to say, after he'd left you, and you had time to think it over, you'd see where here and there his story wasn't well-calked. My own idea was that he wanted a reputation so that he could pose as a devil of a fellow with certain people ashore. It is easy enough to see that even a more careful man than Sam Hollis might take a chance for a smile from a woman like Minnie Arkell.

Anyhow, I never felt at home with Hollis, and so was willing to take Clancy's judgment straight. Hollis was a man about forty, and had been one of Minnie Arkell's admirers ever since I could remember—ever since she was old enough to have any, I mean, and she wasn't any late bloomer, as Clancy used to say.

Hollis went into the Arkell house by the door that had only just closed behind Maurice and Minnie Arkell. I didn't like that very much, and was

thinking of turning back and going in, too; but on second thought it occurred to me that perhaps only Maurice would have a welcome for me. So I didn't enter, but kept on to Crow's Nest instead.

IV

LITTLE JOHNNIE DUNCAN STANDS EXAMINATION

BY this time I should have gone home, I suppose, and had something to eat—it was getting on into the afternoon—but I didn't want to have a talk with my mother yet awhile, and so kept on to Crow's Nest, where I found half a dozen good-natured loafers. Not all were loafers exactly—three or four were simply waiting around before shipping on some seiner for the mackerel season. It promised to shower at the time, too, and of course the gentlemen who formed old Peter's staff could not think of venturing out in threatening weather.

And there they were, with Peter Hines, the paid man in charge of Crow's Nest, keeping a benevolent eye on them. Yarning, arguing, skylarking, advising Peter, and having fun with little Johnnie Duncan they were when I entered. Johnnie was the grandson of the head of the Duncan firm, a fine, clear-eyed boy, that nobody could help liking. He thought fishermen were the greatest people in the world. Whatever a fisherman did was all right to Johnnie.

I had got all the news at Crow's Nest and was just thinking of moving along toward home when Tommie Clancy popped in. Of course that made a difference. I wasn't going to move while Clancy was around.

"My soul, but here's where the real gentlemen are," he had to say first, and then, "Anybody seen Maurice to-day?"

I told him I had, and where.

"Anybody with him?"

"Well, not with him exactly." I shook my head, and said nothing of Minnie Arkell, nor of Sam Hollis, although Clancy, looking at me, I could see, guessed that there was something else; and he might have asked me something more only for the crowd and little Johnnie Duncan.

Johnnie was trying to climb up onto Clancy, and so Clancy, turning from me, took Johnnie up and gave him a toss that all but hit his head against the roof. "And how's she heading, Johnnie-boy?" and taking a seat stood Johnnie up beside him.

"East-s'uth-east, and a fair, fair wind," answered Johnnie.

"East-s'uth-east—my, but you said that fine. And a fair wind? Must be bound Georges Bank way. And how long will you hold that course?"

"From Eastern Point—a hundred and thirty-five mile."

"Yes—and then?"

"Then you throw her up and heave the lead."

"And heave the lead — sure enough. And then?"

"And then, if you find you're clear of the North Shoal, you put her to the s'uth'ard and west'ard till you're in onto the Bank."

"S'uth'ard and west'ard—that's the boy. Man, but I'll live to see you going to the Custom House and taking out your master's papers yet."

"And can I join the Master Mariners then?"

"That's what you can, and walk down Main Street with a swing to your shoulders, too. And now you're up on the Bank and twenty-five fathom of water and the right bottom—and you're a handliner, say, after cod—what then?"

"Let go her chain and begin fishing."

"And would you give her a short or a long string of cable?"

"M-m—I'm not sure. A long string you'd hang on better, but a short scope and you could get out faster in case you were dragging and going onto the shoals. What would you do, Captain Clancy? You never told me that, did you?"

"Well, it would depend, too, though handliners generally calculate on hanging on, blow how it

will. But never mind that; suppose your anchor dragged or parted and into the shoal water you went in a gale, an easterly, say—and the bank right under your lee—wind sixty or seventy or eighty mile an hour—what would you do?"

"Anchor not hold? M-m— Then I'd—give her the second one."

"And if that dragged, too—or parted?"

"Both of 'em? M-m"—Johnnie was taking deep breaths now—"why, then I'd have to put sail to her——"

"What sail?"

"Why, jib, jumbo, fore and main."

"And the wind blowing eighty mile an hour?"

"Why, yes, if she'd stand it."

"My, but she'd have to be an able vessel that—all four lowers and the wind blowing eighty mile an hour. Man, but you're a dog! Suppose she couldn't stand it?"

"Then I'd reef the mains'l."

"And if that was too much—what then?"

"Reef it again."

"And too much yet?"

"Balance-reef it—maybe take it in altogether—and the jib with it, and get out the riding-sail."

"And would you do nothing to the fores'l?"

"M-m— I dunno—with some vessels maybe I'd reef that, too—maybe take it in altogether."

"My, but you're cert'nly a dog. And what then?"

"Why, then I'd try to work her out."

"And would you be doing anything with the lead?"

"Oh, we'd be keeping the lead going all the time, for banging her across and back like that you wouldn't know where you were just."

"And would you come clear, d'y' think?"

"Yes, sir—if the gear held and with an able vessel we ought to."

"If the gear held—that's it. Be sure, Johnnie-boy, you see that the gear is all right before ever you leave port. And with an able vessel, you say? With that new one of your gran'pa's—would you come clear with her?"

"Oh, she'd come clear—built to go fresh halibuting next winter, that one."

"Yes—and seining this spring. But suppose now you were haddocking—trawling—eight or ten dories, and you just arrived on the grounds, picked out a good spot, and there you are—you're all baited up and ready?"

"Winter time?"

"Winter time, yes."

"First I'd single-reef the mains'l. Then I'd hold her up a little—not too much—me being skipper would be to the wheel myself—and then

I'd give the order, 'Dories to the rail!' and then, when everything was all right—when I'd be satisfied we wouldn't foul the next vessel's trawls—I'd call out, 'Over with your wind'ard dory!' "

"Loud and clear you'd holler, because the wind might be high."

"Loud and clear, yes—'Let go your wind'ard dory!'—like that. And 'Set to the west'ard,' or the east'ard, whatever it was—according to the tide, you know. I'd call that out to the dory as it went sliding by the quarter—the vessel, of course, 'd be sailing all the time—and next, 'Wind'ard dory to the rail!' And then, when we'd gone ahead enough, again, 'Let go your looard dory!' and then, 'Looard dory to the rail! Let go your wind'ard dory! Let go your looard dory!' and so till they were all over the side."

"And supposing, they being all out, it came on thick, or snowing, and some of them went astray, and it was time to go home, having filled her with eighty or ninety or a hundred thousand of fresh fish, a fair wind, and every prospect of a good market—what then?"

"Oh, I'd have to wait, of course—cruise around and stand by."

"And suppose you couldn't find them again?"

"Why, after waiting until I was sure they were gone, I'd come home."

"And your flag?"

"Half-mast."

"Half-mast—that's it. I hope you'll never have to fly a half-masted flag, Johnnie. But suppose you did see them, and they were in shoal water, say—and the shoals to looard, of course, and it blowing——"

"I'd stand in and get them."

"And it blowing hard—blowing hard, Johnnie?—and shoal—shoal water?"

"Why"—Johnnie was looking troubled—"why, I'd have to stand in just the same, wouldn't I?"

"Your own men and you ask me, Johnnie-boy?"

"Why, of course I'd have to stand in and get them."

"And if you got in so far you couldn't get out—you got smothered, say?"

"Why, then—then we'd be lost—all hands would be lost."

Poor Johnnie! he was all but crying.

"That's it. And that's where some would say you showed yourself a man, and some a fool, Johnnie-boy. Some would say, 'Use judgment—think of the other eighteen or twenty men safe aboard the vessel.' Would you use judgment, or what, Johnnie?"

"M-m— I don't know. What would you do, Captain Clancy?"

"What d'y' think I'd do, Johnnie?" Clancy drew the boy up and tucked the little face to his own broad breast. The rest of us knew well enough what Clancy would do. "Judgment hell!" Clancy would say, and go in and get lost—or maybe get away with it where a more careful man would be lost—but we waited to hear what Johnnie —such a little boy—would say. He said it at last, after looking long into Clancy's face.

"I think you'd go in, Captain Clancy."

Clancy laughed at that. "Lord, Johnnie-boy, no wonder everybody loves you. No matter what a man does, all you see is the best that's in him."

It was time to clean up then, and Johnnie of course was bound to help.

V

FROM OUT OF CROW'S NEST

"WHAT'LL I do with this?" asked Johnnie, in the middle of the cleaning up, holding up a pan of sweepings.

"Oh, that"—Clancy naturally took charge—"heave it overboard. Ebb tide'll carry it away. Heave it into the slip. Wait—maybe you'll have to hoist the hatches. 'Tisn't raining much now, anyway, and it will soon stop altogether. Might as well go aloft and make a good job of the hatches, hadn't he, Peter?"

"Wait a minute." Peter was squinting through the porthole. "I shouldn't wonder but this is one of our fellows coming in. I know she's a banker. The Enchantress, I think. Look, Tommie, and see what you make of her."

Clancy looked. "That's who it is, Peter. Hi, Johnnie, here'll be a chance for you to hoist the flag. Hurry aloft and tend to the hatches, as Peter says, and you can hoist the flag for the Enchantress home from the Banks."

In bad weather, like it was that day, the little

balcony of Crow's Nest was shut in by little hatches, arranged so that they could be run up and down, the same as hatches are slid over the companionway of a fisherman's cabin or forec's'le. Johnnie was a pretty active boy, and he was up the rope ladder and onto the roof in a few seconds. We could hear him walking above, and soon the hatches slid away and we all could look freely out to sea again.

"All right below?" called out Johnnie.

"Not yet," answered Peter. He was standing by the rail of the balcony and untwisting the halyards that served to hoist the signal-flags to the masthead. Peter seemed slow at it, and Clancy called out again, "Wait a bit, and we'll overhaul the halyards." Then, looking up and noticing that Johnnie was standing on the edge of the roof, he added, "And be careful and not slip on those wet planks."

"Aye, aye!" Johnnie was in high glee. "And then I can run up the flag for the Enchantress?"

"Sure, you've been such a good boy to-day."

"M-m—but that'll be fine. I can catch the halyards from here if you'll swing them in a little."

"All right—be careful. Here you go now."

"Let 'em come—I got——"

The first thing we knew of what had happened was when we saw Johnnie's body come pitching

down. He struck old Peter first, staggering him, and from there he shot down out of sight.

Clancy jumped to the rail in time to save Peter from toppling over it and just in time, as he said afterward, to see the boy splash in the slip below. He yanked Peter to his feet, and then, without turning around, he called out, "A couple of you run to the head of the dock—there'll be a dory there somewhere—row 'round to the slip with it. He'll be carried under the south side—look for him there if I'm not there before you. Drive her now!"

"Here, Joe, wake up!" Clancy had untied the ends of the halyards after whirling them through the block above, and now had the whole line piled up on the balcony. He took a couple of turns around his waist, took another turn around a cleat under the balcony rail, passed the bight of the line to me, and said, "Here, Joe, lower me. Take hold you, too, Peter. Pay out and not too careful. Oh, faster, man! If he ain't dead he'll drown, maybe —if he gets sucked in and caught under those piles it's all off."

He was sliding over the rail, the line tautening to his weight in no time, and he talking all the time. "Lower away—lower, lower! Faster—faster than that—he's rising again—second time —and drifting under the wharf, sure's fate!

Faster—faster—what's wrong?—what's caught there?—let her run!"

The halyards had become fouled, and Peter was trying to clear them, calling to Clancy to wait.

"Fouled?" roared Clancy. "Cast it off altogether. Let go altogether and let me drop."

"We can't—the bight of it's caught around Peter's legs!" I called to him.

"Oh, hell! take a couple of half-hitches around the cleat then—look out now!" He gripped the halyards high above his head with both hands, gave a jumping pull, and let himself drop. The line parted and down he shot.

He must have been shaken by the shock of his fall, but I guess he had his senses with him when he came up again, for in no time he was striking toward where Johnnie had come up last. Then I ran downstairs, down to the dock, and was just in time to see Parsons and Moore rowing a dory desperately up the slip, and Clancy with Johnnie chest-up, and a hand under his neck, kicking from under the stringers, and calling out, "This way with the dory—drive her, fellows, drive her!"

I did not wait for any more—I knew Johnnie was safe with Clancy—but ran to the office of the Duncans and told them that Johnnie had fallen into the dock and got wet, and that it might be well to telephone for a doctor. His grandfather

knew it was serious without my saying any more, and rang up at once.

That had hardly been done when Clancy came in the door with Johnnie in his arms. The boy was limp and unconscious and water was dripping from him. Old Mr. Duncan was worried enough, but composed in his manner for all that. He met Clancy at the door. "This way, Captain; lay him on this couch. The doctor will be here in a very few minutes now. Perhaps we can do something while he is on the way. Just how did it happen? and we'll know better what to do, perhaps."

Clancy told his story in forty words. "He's probably shook up and his lungs must be full of water. But he may come out all right—his eyelids quivered coming up the dock. Better strip his shirt and waist off. He's got a lot of water in him—roll him over and we'll get some of it out."

He worked away on Johnnie, and had the water pretty well out of him by the time the uncle and the doctor came. It was hard work for a time, but it came at last to when the doctor stood up, rested his arms for a breath, said, "Ah—he's all right now," and went on again. It was not so very long after that that Johnnie opened his eyes —for about a second. But pretty soon he opened them to stay. His first look was for his grand-

father, but his first word was for Clancy. "I could see you when you jumped, Captain Clancy —it was great."

Then they bundled Johnnie into a carriage and his uncle took him home.

"Lord, but I thought he was gone, Joe. But let's get out of this," said Clancy, and we were making for the door, with Clancy's clothes still wringing wet, when we were stopped by the elder Mr. Duncan, who shook hands with both of us and then went on to speak to Clancy.

"Captain Clancy——"

"Captain once, but——"

"I know, I know, but not from lack of ability, at any rate. Let me thank you. His mother will thank you herself later, and make you feel, I know, her sense of what she owes to you. And his cousin Alice—she thinks the world of him. There, I know you don't want to hear any more, but you shall—maybe later—though it may come up in another way. But tell me—wait, come inside a minute. Come in you, too, Joe," he said, turning to me, but I said I'd rather wait outside. I wanted to have a smoke to get my nerves steady again, I guess.

So Clancy and Mr. Duncan went inside, and through the window, whenever I looked up, I could see them. As their talk went on I could see

that they were getting very much interested about something or other. Clancy particularly was laying down the law with a clenched fist and an arm that swung through the air like a jibing boom. Somebody, I knew, was getting it.

When they came out Mr. Duncan stopped at the door, and said, as if by way of a parting word, "And so you think that's the cause of Withrow's picking a quarrel with Maurice? Well, I never thought of that before, but maybe you're right. And now, what do you say to a vessel for yourself?"

"Me take a vessel? No, sir—not for me. But when you've got vessels to hand around, Mr. Duncan, bear Maurice in mind—he's a fisherman."

We left Mr. Duncan then, he making ready to telephone to learn how Johnnie was getting along. Clancy said his clothes were beginning to feel so dry that he did not know as he would go to his boarding-house. "I think we'd better go up to the Anchorage and have a little touch. But I forgot—you don't drink, Joe? No? So I thought, but don't you care—you're young yet. Come along, anyway, and have a smoke."

And so we went along to the Anchorage, and while we were there, I smoking one of those barroom cigars and Clancy nursing the after-taste of his drink and declaring that a touch of good liquor

was equal to a warm stove for drying wet clothes, I told him what I would have told him in Crow's Nest if there had not been so many around—about Minnie Arkell calling Maurice back into her grandmother's house, and then Sam Hollis coming along and going in after him.

"What!" and stopped dead. Suddenly he brought his fist through the air. "I'll"—and as suddenly stopped it midway. "No, I won't, either. But I'll put Maurice wise to them. What should he know at his age and with his up-bringing of what's in the heads of people like them. And if I don't have something further to say to old Mr. Duncan! But now let's go back to Arkell's—come on, Joe."

But I didn't go back with him. I didn't think that I could do Maurice any good then, and I might be in the way if Clancy wanted to speak his mind out to anybody. I went home instead, where I expected to have troubles of my own, for I knew that my mother wouldn't like the idea of my going seining.

VI

MAURICE BLAKE GETS A VESSEL

THREE days after Johnnie Duncan fell out of Crow's Nest the new Duncan vessel designed by Will Somers was towed around from Essex. She had been named the Johnnie Duncan. I spent the best part of the next three days watching the sparmakers and riggers at work on her. And when they had done with her and she fit to go to sea, she did look handsome. She had not quite the length of the new vessel of Sam Hollis's, which lay at Withrow's dock just below her, and that probably helped to give her a more powerful look to people that compared them. Too able-looking altogether to be real fast, some thought, to hold the Withrow vessel in anything short of a gale, but I didn't feel so sure she wouldn't sail in a moderate breeze, too. I had seen her on the stocks, and knew the beautiful lines below the water-mark. And she was going to carry the sail to drive her. I took particular pains to get the measurements of her mainmast while it lay on the dock under the shears. It was eighty-seven feet—and she only a hundred and ten feet over all—and

it stepped plumb in the middle of her, further forward than a mainmast was generally put in a fisherman. To that was shackled a seventy-five foot boom, and eighty-odd tons of pig-iron were cemented close down to her keel, and that floored over and stanchioned snug. For the rest, she was very narrow forward, as I think I said—everybody said she'd never stand the strain of her forerigging when they got to driving her on a long passage. And she carried an ungodly bowsprit —thirty-seven feet outboard—easily the longest bowsprit out of Gloucester. Topmasts to match, and there was some sail to drive a vessel. But she had the hull for it, full and yet easy, with the greatest beam pretty well aft of the mainmast, and she drew fifteen and a half feet of water.

I was still looking her over, her third day in the riggers' and sailmakers' hands, when Clancy came along.

"Handsome, ain't she, and only needing a skipper and crew to be off on the Southern cruise, eh, Joe?"

"That's all. And according to the talk, you're to be the skipper."

"Well, talk has another according coming to it."

"I'm sorry to hear that. But what happened at Mrs. Arkell's the other day?"

"What happened? Joe, but I was glad you

didn't come with me. You'd have felt as I did about it, I know. There they were—the two of them—Hollis and Withrow—yes, Withrow there—when I broke in on them, and Maurice between them—drunk. Yes, sir, drunk and helpless. They called it a wine-party, as though a man couldn't get as good and drunk on wine in a private residence as ever he could on whiskey or rum in the back room of a saloon. Well, sir, I asked a question or two, and they tried to face me out, but out they went—first Hollis, and then Withrow, one after the other, and both good and lively. And then Minnie Arkell popped in from her own house by way of the backyard. She didn't expect to see me—I know she didn't. Had gone over to her house when the men began to drink, she said, and had just come over to see granny.

"Well, I told her what I thought. 'It means nothing to you,' I said, 'to see a man make a fool of himself—that's been a good part of your business in life for some time now—to see men make fools of themselves for you. Withrow had reasons for wanting him disgraced—never mind why. Sam Hollis, maybe, has his reasons too. And the two of them are being helped along by you. You could have stopped this thing here to-day, but you didn't.' 'No, no, Tommie,' she says. 'Yes, yes,' I went on, 'and don't try to tell me different.

If I didn't know you since you were a little girl you might be able to convince me, but I know you. Maurice, when he was himself, passed you by. You were bound to have him. You know a real man, more's the pity, when you see one, and you know that Maurice, young and green and soft as he is, has more life and dash than a dozen of the kind you've been mixing with lately.'

"Oh, but I laid it on, Joe. Yes. A shame to have to talk like that to a woman, but I just had to. I didn't stop there. 'You're handsome, and you're rich, Minnie Arkell; got a lot of life left in you yet, and go off travelling with people who get their names regularly in the Boston papers; but just the same, Minnie Arkell, there are women in jail not half so bad as you—women doing time who've done less mischief in the world than you have.' "

"Wasn't that pretty rough, Tommie?"

"Rough? Lord, yes—but true, Joe, true. And if you'd only see poor Maurice lying there! Cried? I could've cried, Joe—not since my mother died did I come so near to it. But it was done.

"Well, I made Minnie go and get her grandmother. And, Joe, if you'd seen that fine old lady—oh, but she's got a heart in her—stoop and put Maurice's head on her bosom as if he

was a little child. 'The poor, poor boy. No mother here,' she said, 'and the best man on earth might come to it. Leave him to me, Tommie.' Lord, I could have knelt down at her feet—the heart in her, Joe."

"And how has Maurice been since?"

"All right. That was the first time in his life that he was drunk. I think it will be his last. But let's go aboard the Johnnie."

After looking over the Johnnie Duncan and admiring her to our hearts' content, we sat down in her cabin and began to talk of the seining season to come. Others came down and joined in—George Moore, Eddie Parsons among others—and they asked Clancy what he was going to do. Was he going to see about a chance to go seining, or what? Moore said he's been waiting to see what Maurice Blake was going to do; but as it was beginning to look as though Maurice was done for, he guessed he'd take a look around. He asked Clancy what he thought, and Clancy said he didn't know—time enough yet.

Maurice Blake himself dropped down then. He was looking better, and everybody was glad to see it. He'd quit drinking—that was certain; and now he was a picture of a man—not pretty, but strong-looking, with his eyes glowing and his skin flushing with the good blood inside him. He took

a seat on the lockers and began to whittle a block of soft pine into a model of a hull, and after a while, with a squint along the sheer of his little model, he asked if anybody had seen Tom O'Donnell or Wesley Marrs. Several said yes, they had, and he asked where, and when they told him he got up and said he guessed he'd go along—as he couldn't get a vessel himself, he might as well see about a chance to go hand. "And as we've been together so much in times gone by, Tommie, and you, Eddie and George, what do you say if we go together now?"

"All right," said Clancy, "but wait a minute—who's that in the gangway?"

It turned out to be Johnnie Duncan. He had a fat bundle under his arm, and bundle and all Clancy took him up, tossed him into the air, said "All right again, Johnnie-boy?" and kissed him when he caught him down.

Johnnie started to undo his bundle. "I tell you it's great to be out again—the way they kept me cooped up the last few days," and then, cutting the string to hurry matters, opened the bundle and spread a handsome set of colors on the lockers. "The Johnnie Duncan's," said he. "I picked out the kind they were to be, but mummer worked the monograms herself. See, red and blue. And see that for an ensign! and the firm's flag—and the

highs—look!—the J. A. D. twisted up the same as on the handkerchiefs we strained the coffee through last week. And the burgee—the letters on the burgee—my cousin Alice worked them. And these stars—see, on the ensign—mummer and my cousin both worked them. Gran'pa said the vessel ought to be sure a lucky one, and all she needs is an able master, he says, and if Captain Blake will take her he'll be proud to have him sail the Johnnie Duncan——"

Maurice Blake stood up. "Me?"

"Yes," said Johnnie. "Gran'pa says that you can have her just as soon as you go to the Custom House and get your papers. There, I think I remembered it all, except of course that the colors are from me and mummer and my cousin Alice, and will you fly them for us?"

Maurice laid down his model and picked up the colors. Then he looked at Johnnie and said, "Thank you, Johnnie; and tell your mother, Johnnie, and your cousin, that I'll fly the Johnnie Duncan's colors—and stand by them—if ever it comes to standing by—till she goes under. Tell your grandfather that I'll be proud to be master of his vessel and I'll sail her the best I know how."

"That's you, Maurice," said Clancy.

Maurice drew his hand across his eyes and sat down again. And as soon as they decently could,

Clancy, George Moore, and Eddie Parsons asked him if they might ship with him for the Southern cruise. Maurice said they very well knew that he'd be glad to have them. He asked me, too, he felt so good, and of course I jumped at the chance.

VII

CLANCY CROSSES MINNIE ARKELL

THE Johnnie Duncan only needed to have her stores taken aboard to go to sea. And that was attended to next morning, and she was out for her trial trip the same afternoon. Everybody said she looked as handsome as a photograph going out, though all the old sharks, when they saw her mainsail hoisted for the first time, said she'd certainly have need of her quarter and draught to stand up under it.

It was a great day for sailing, though—the finest kind of a breeze, and smooth water. We early carried away our foretopmast, which had a flaw in it. It was just as well to discover it then. Without topsail and balloon we had it out with the Eastern Point on her way back from Boston. She was not much of a steamer for speed, but her schedule called for twelve knots and she generally made pretty near it—eleven or eleven and a half, according to how her stokers felt, I guess. We headed her off after a while, and that was doing pretty well for that breeze, with a new vessel not yet loosened up.

"But the balloon was too much for her," said Mr. Duncan, as we shot into the dock after beating the Eastern Point.

"No, the balloon was all right—'twas the topm'st was a bit light," answered Maurice.

Old Mr. Duncan smiled at that. "But what do you think of her, Captain Blake?"

"Oh, she's like all the rest of them when she's alone—sails like the devil," the skipper answered to that, but he smiled with it and we all knew he was satisfied with her.

That night was the Master Mariners' Ball, and I waited up till late to talk with my cousin Nell, who had gone there with Will Somers. Finally they came along past my house and I hailed them.

Nell broke right in as usual with what was uppermost in her mind. "I don't suppose you saw me and Alice, but we were in Mr. Duncan's office when you and Mr. Clancy and Captain Blake were coming up the dock to-day after the trial trip. Mr. Duncan told us what Captain Blake said of the Johnnie Duncan, but now tell me, what did the rest of you think of her? What does your friend Clancy say? He knows a vessel."

"Clancy," I answered, "thought what we all thought, I guess—that she's a fast vessel any way you take her, but he won't say she's the fastest vessel out of Gloucester, even after she's put in trim

and loosened up. But in a sea-going way and with wind enough—with wind enough, mind—he thinks she'll do pretty well."

"With wind enough and in a sea-way?" repeated Nell. "Then I hope that when the fishermen's race is sailed next fall it's a howling gale and seas clear to your mast-head. Yes, and you needn't laugh—don't you know what it means to Will?"

And I did realize. Somers, a fine fellow, was just then beginning to get a chance at designing fishermen. So far he had done pretty well, but it was on the Johnnie Duncan, I knew, he had pinned his faith. For his own sake, I hoped that the Johnnie would do great things, but for Nell's sake I prayed she would. Nell thought a lot of Will and wasn't ashamed to show her liking, and thinking of that set me to thinking of other things.

"Was Miss Foster to the ball?" I asked her.

"She was," said Nell.

"And with whom?"

"Mr. Withrow."

"Oh-h, Lord!"

"Oh-h!—and why Oh-h-h?"

"I wish she'd gone with Maurice."

"H-m—that was drunk the other day?"

"Yes, I suppose that queers him forever. And

the other fellow does ten times as bad, only under cover. Who told you?"

"Never mind. Wasn't he?"

"Was Maurice to the ball?"

"He was."

"And who with?"

"With nobody."

"Good. Was Mrs. Miner there?"

"Mrs. Miner?"—and such a sniff!—"yes, she was there."

"With Sam Hollis?"

"Yes, and flirted with half the men in the hall and with your Maurice Blake outrageously."

"That so? Could Maurice help that much? But I wish, just the same, that Miss Foster had gone with Maurice."

"Well, there was one very good reason."

"What?"

"He didn't ask her. And Mr. Withrow made a handsome cavalier anyway."

"A handsome"—I was going to say lobster, but I didn't. Instead I told her why Maurice didn't ask Miss Foster—that he didn't think enough of himself, probably. And that led up to a talk about Maurice Blake and Clancy. Before I got through I had Nell won over. Indeed, I think she was won over before I began at all.

"There's a whole lot you don't know yet," she

said at last. "Get Captain Blake to make a name for himself seining, and for sailing his vessel as she ought to be sailed, and I'll get down on my knees to Alice for him—sail her as she ought to be sailed, remember. And make a good stock with her, and you'll see."

So, as I walked down the street with Nell and Will Somers a part of the way, the talk was in that strain, and when I left them, after passing Sam Hollis bound home, it was with the hope of things coming out all right. I was feeling happy until I got near Minnie Arkell's door, where my worrying began again, for there on the steps and in the glare of the electric light was Minnie Arkell herself, as though she were waiting for somebody. And not wanting to have her know that I saw her waiting at her door steps at that time of night, I stepped in the shadows until she should go in. It was then that Maurice came along, and she called him up. And he went up and stood on the step below her and she bent over him as if she wanted to lift him up. And it was less than five minutes since Sam Hollis left her.

"Come around by way of the side door of grandma's house, Maurice, and through her yard and into my house, and nobody will see you. And then no old grannies will talk and we'll have a little supper all to ourselves. Hurry now." She was

talking as if she owned him. I did not hear what Maurice said, nor I did not want to hear; but making for the corner, he went by me like a shot, and "O Lord!" I heard him groan as he passed me, not recognizing me—not even seeing me, I believe.

I did not know what to make of it and let him go by. But after he had turned the corner and Minnie Arkell had shut her door—and she watched him till he disappeared around the corner—I ran after him. In my hurrying after him I heard the voice of Clancy coming down the street. He was singing. I had heard from Nell of Clancy being at the ball, where he was as usual in charge of the commissary. I could imagine how they must have drove things around the punch-bowl with Clancy to the wheel. He was coming along now and for blocks anybody that was not dead could hear him. And getting nearer I had to admire him. He was magnificent, even with a list to port. Not often, I imagined, did men of Clancy's lace and figure get into evening dress. The height and breadth of him!—and spreading enough linen on his shirt front to make a sail for quite a little vessel. He was almost on top of me, with

> "Oh, hove flat down on th' Western Banks
> Was the Bounding Billow, Captain Hanks—
> And——"

when I hailed him.

"Hulloh, if it ain't Joe Buckley. Why, Joey, but aren't you out pretty late to-night? But maybe you're only standing watch for somebody? Three o'clock, Joey, and no excuse for you, for you didn't have to stand by the supplies—" But then I rushed him around the corner, and down the street to the side door of Mrs. Arkell's and just in time to head off Maurice, bound as I knew for Minnie Arkell's house across the yard. I didn't have a chance to say a word to Tommie, but he didn't have to be told. If I'd been explaining for a week he couldn't have picked things up any better than he did.

"Maurice—hi, Maurice! Oh, 'tis you, isn't it. Well, Maurice-boy, all the night I waited for a chance to have a word with you, but ne'er a chance could I get. Early in the evening—when I was fit for ladies' company—Miss Foster said how proud she was to know me—me, who had saved her cousin Johnnie's life. And then she asked me about the vessel, and I told her, Maurice, that nothing like the Duncan ever pushed salt water from out of her way before. 'Nothing with two sticks in her,' says I, and I laid it on thick; 'and Maurice Blake,' says I—and there, Maurice, I only spoke true catechism. 'Maurice Blake,' says I, 'is the man to sail her.' She was glad, she said, to know that, because her chum, Miss Buck-

ley—Joe's cousin there—wanted that particular vessel to be a success. And she herself was interested in it. Never mind the reasons, she said. And she always did believe—and, Maurice, listen now—she knew that Captain Blake would do the Johnnie Duncan justice. And I said to her—well, Maurice, what I said you can guess well enough. No, come to think, you can't guess, but I won't tell you to your face. But thinking of it now, I mind, Maurice, the time when we were dorymates—you and me, Maurice—and the cold winter's day our dory was capsized. And dark coming on and nothing in sight, and I could see you beginning to get tired. But tired as you were, Maurice, tired as you were and the gray look beginning to creep over you, you says, 'Tommie, take the plug strap for a while, you.' "

"But you didn't take it, Tommie."

"No, I didn't take it—and why? I didn't take it—and why? Because, though the mothers that bore us both were great women—all fire and iron —'twas in me to last longer—you a boy and your first winter fishing, and me a tough, hard old trawler. And you had all of life before you, and I'd run through some hard years of mine. If I'd gone 'twould have been no great loss, but you, Maurice, innocent as a child—how could I? I'd known men and women, good and bad—I'd lived life and I'd

had my chance and thrown it away—but at your age the things you had to learn! Maybe I didn't think it all out like that, but that was why I didn't take the plug strap. But, Maurice-boy, I never forgot it. 'Take the plug strap, you, Tommie,' you says. We were dory-mates, of course, but, Maurice-boy, I'll never forget it."

Clancy took off his hat and drew his hand across his forehead. "And where were you bound when we stopped you, Maurice?'

"Oh, I don't know. To take a walk maybe."

"Sure, and why not? Let's all take a walk. Let's take a walk down to the dock and have a look at the vessel. Too dark? So it is, but we can see the shadow of her masts rising up to the clouds and we can open up the cabin and go below and have a smoke. Come, Maurice. Come on, Joe."

And down to the cabin of the Johnnie Duncan we went, and Clancy never in such humor. For three hours—from a little after three o'clock until after six—we sat on the lockers, Clancy talking and we smoking and roaring at him. Only the sun coming up over Eastern Point, lighting up the harbor and striking into the cabin of the Johnnie Duncan, brought Clancy to a halt.

He moved then and we with him. We left Maurice at the door of old Mrs. Arkell's, the old

lady herself in the doorway and asking us if we had a good time at the ball. Standing on the steps, before he went in, Maurice said to me: "Tell your cousin, Joe, that when I do race the Johnnie, I'll take the spars out of her before anything gets by—take the spars out or send her under. I can't do any more than that."

The Johnnie Duncan was to leave at ten o'clock and so I left Clancy at his boarding-house. He looked tired when I left him. But he was chuckling, too. I asked him what it was that made him smile so.

"I'll give you three guesses," he said, but I didn't guess.

VIII

THE SEINING FLEET PUTS OUT TO SEA

THE rest of that morning, between leaving Clancy and getting back to the dock again, I spent in cleaning up and overhauling my home outfit. My mother couldn't be made to believe that store bedding was of much use—and she was right, I guess—and so a warranted mattress and blankets and comforters and a pillow were made into a bundle and thrown onto a waiting wagon. Then it was good-by to all—good-by to my cousin Nell, who had come over from her house, good-by and a kiss for her little sister—late for school she was, but didn't care she said—and then good-by to my mother. That took longer. Then it was into the wagon with my bedding and off to the dock.

At Duncan's store I had charged up to me such other stuff as I needed: Two suits of oilskins, yellow and black, two sou'westers, heavy and light, two blue-gray flannel shirts, a black sweater, a pair of rubber boots, two pairs of woollen mitts and

four pairs of cotton mitts, five pounds of smoking tobacco, a new pipe, and so on. When I had all my stuff tied up, I swung up abreast of Clancy and together we headed for the end of Duncan's dock, where the Johnnie Duncan lay.

Quite a fleet went out ahead of us that morning. Being a new vessel, there was a lot of things that were not ready until the last minute. And then there was the new foretopmast—promised at nine o'clock it was—not slung and stayed up until after ten. And then our second seine, which finally we had to leave for Wesley Marrs to take next morning. And there were the usual two or three men late. Clancy and Andie Howe went up to have a farewell drink and were gone so long that the skipper sent me after them. I found them both in the Anchorage, where Clancy had met a man he hadn't seen for ten years—an old dory-mate—thought he was lost five years before in the West Indies. "But here he is, fine and handsome. Another little touch all around and a cigar for Joe, and we're off for the Southern cruise."

We left then and started for the dock, with Clancy full of poetry. There happened to be a young woman looking out of a window on the way down. Clancy did not know her, nor she him, so far as I knew, but something about him seemed to take her eye. She leaned far out and waved

her handkerchief at him. That was enough. Clancy broke out—

"The wind blows warm and the wind blows fair,
Oh, the wind blows westerly—
Our jibs are up and our anchor's in,
For the Duncan's going to sea.
And will you wait for me, sweetheart?
Oh, will you wait for me?
And will you be my love again
When I come back from sea?

"Oh, sway away and start her sheets
And point her easterly—
It's tackle-pennant, boom her out
And turn the Duncan free.
You'll see some sailing now, my boys,
We're off for the Southern cruise—
They'll try to hold the Johnnie D,
But they'll find it of no use."

I didn't wait any longer than that for Clancy, but ran ahead to the Duncan. I found her with jibs up and paying off. I was in time to get aboard without trouble, but Clancy and Howe coming later had to make a pier-head jump of it. Clancy, who could leap like a hound—drunk or sober—made it all right with his feet on the end of the bowsprit and his fingers on the balloon stay when he landed, but Howe fell short, and we had the liveliest kind of a time gaffing him in over the bow, he not being able

to swim. They must have heard us yelling clear to Eastern Point, I guess. Andie didn't mind. "I must be with a lot of dogs—have to jump overboard to get aboard." He spat out what water he had to, and started right in to winch up the mainsail with the gang. He had on a brand-new suit, good cloth and a fine fit.

"You'll soon dry out in the sun, Andie-boy," they all said to him.

"I s'pose so. But will my clothes ever fit me again like they did?—and my fine new patent-leather shoes!"

Drifting down by the dock next to Duncan's our long bowsprit almost swept off a row of old fellows from the cap-log. They had to scramble, but didn't mind. "Good luck, and I hope you fill her up," they called out.

"Oh, we'll try and get our share of 'em," our fellows called back.

There was a young woman on the next dock—one of the kind that quite often come down to take snap-shots. A stranger to Gloucester she must have been, for not only that Gloucester girls don't generally come down to the docks to see the fishermen off, but she said good-by to us. She meant all right, but she should never have said good-by to a fisherman. It's unlucky. Too many of them don't come back, and then the good-by comes true.

The Seining Fleet Puts Out to Sea

Andie Howe looked a funny sight when we were making sail. Clancy, who, once he got started, took a lot of stopping, was still going:

"Oh, the Johnnie Duncan, fast and able—
Good-by, dear, good-by, my Mabel—
And will you save a kiss for me
When I come back from sea?"

"Yes," roared Andie,

"And don't forget I love you, dear,
And save a kiss for me,"

with the salt water dripping from his fine new suit of clothes and the patent-leather shoes he was so fond of.

And Clancy again:

"Oh, a deep blue sky and a deep blue sea
And a blue-eyed girl awaiting me,"

and Howe,

"Oh, too-roo-roo and a too-roo-ree
And a hi-did-dy ho-did-dy ho-dee-dee,"

and Clancy,

"Too-roo-roo and a too-roo-ree,
The Johnnie Duncan's going to sea,"

and Howe—a little shy on the words—

"Tum-did-dy dum-did-dy.dum-did-dy-dum,
Hoo-roo-roo and a dum by gum."

And by that time the gang were joining in and sheeting flat the topsails with a great swing.

I don't suppose that Gloucester Harbor will ever again look as beautiful to me as it did that morning when we sailed out. Forty sail of seiners leaving within two hours, and to see them going —to see them one after another loose sails and up with them, break out anchors, pay off, and away! It was the first day of April and the first fine day in a week, and those handsome vessels going out one after the other in their fresh paint and new sails—it was a sight to make a man's heart thump.

"The Johnnie Duncan, seiner of Gloucester—watch her walk across the Bay to-day," was George Moore's little speech when he came on deck to heave his first bucket of scraps over the rail. George was cook.

And she did walk. We squared away with half a dozen others abreast of us and Eastern Point astern of us all. Among the forty sail of fishermen that were standing across the Bay that morning we knew we'd find some that could sail. There was the Ruth Ripley, Pitt Ripley's vessel. He worked her clear of the bunch that came out of the harbor and came after us, and we had it with him across to Cape Cod. Forty miles before we beat him; but Pitt Ripley had a great sailer in the Ruth, and we would have been satisfied to hold

her even. "Only wait till by and by, when we get her in trim," we kept saying.

"This one'll smother some of them yet," said Eddie Parsons, looking back at the Ruth. He felt pretty good, because he had the wheel when we finally crossed the Ruth's bow.

"With good steering—yes," said Clancy.

"Of course," exclaimed Eddie to that, and filled his chest full, and then, looking around and catching everybody laughing, let his chest flatten again.

The skipper didn't have much to say right away about her sailing. He was watching her, though. He'd look at her sails, have an eye on how they set and drew, take a look over her quarter, another look aloft, and then back at the Ruth, then a look for the vessels still ahead. "We'll know more about it after we've tried her out with the Lucy Foster or the Colleen Bawn or Hollis's new vessel," he said, after a while.

One thing we soon found out, and that was that she was a stiff vessel. That was after a squall hit us off Cape Cod. We watched the rest of them then. Some luffed and others took in sail, and about them we could not tell. But those that took it full gave us an idea of how we were behaving. "Let her have it and see how she'll do," said the skipper, and Howe, who was at the wheel—with his clothes good and dry again—let her have it

full. With everything on and tearing through the water like a torpedo-boat, one puff rolled her down till she filled herself chock up between the house and rail, but she kept right on going. Some vessels can't sail at all with decks under, but the Johnnie never stopped. "She's all right, this one," said everybody then. A second later she took a slap of it over her bow, nearly smothering the cook, who had just come up to dump some potato parings over the rail. The way he came up coughing and spitting and then his dive for the companionway—everybody had to roar.

"Did y'see the cook hop?—did y'see him hop?" called Andie, who was afraid somebody had missed it.

We passed the Marauder, Soudan McLeod, soon after. His mainmast had broken off eight or ten feet below the head. They were clearing away the wreckage. "I s'pose I oughter had more sense," he called out as we went by.

"Oh, I don't know—maybe the spar was rotten," said Maurice, and that was a nice way to put it, too.

That night it came a flat calm, and with barely steerage way for us. There was a big four-masted coaster bound south, too, and light, and for the best part of the night we had a drifting match with her. Coasters as a rule are not great all-

round sailers, but some of them, with their flat bottoms and shoal draft, in a fair wind and going light, can run like ghosts, and this was one of that kind. We had our work cut out to hold this one while the wind was light and astern, but in the morning, when it hauled and came fresher, we went flying over the shoals. So far as the looks of it went the big coaster might as well have been anchored then.

All that day we held on. And it was a lesson in sailing to see the way some of those seiners were handled. Our skipper spent most of that day finding out how she sailed best and putting marks on her sheets for quick trimming by and by.

Trying each other out, measuring one vessel against another, the fleet went down the coast. We passed a few and were passed by none, and that was something. Ahead of us somewhere were a half-dozen flyers. If we could have beaten some of them we should have had something to brag about; but no telling, we might get our chance yet.

IX

MACKEREL

THROUGHOUT all that night the lights of the fleet were all about us, ahead and behind. At breakfast next morning—four o'clock—we were off Delaware Breakwater, and that afternoon at two we began the mast-head watch for fish. And on that fine April day it was a handsome sight—forty sail of seiners in sight, spread out and cruising lazily.

The skipper was the first to get into his oilskins and heavy sweater, for with a vessel hopping along at even no more than six or seven knots by the wind it is pretty chilly aloft, nice and comfortable though it may be on deck in the sun.

There was a game of seven-up going on in the cabin, and the sun striking down the companion-way was bothering Andie Howe. He began to complain. "Hi, up there to the wheel! Hi, Eddie—can't you put her on the other tack?—the sun's in my eyes. How can a man see the cards with the sun in his eyes?"

Parsons didn't have the chance to talk back when the word came from aloft to put the seine-

boat over the side, and after that to overhaul the seine and pile it in the boat. Vessels ahead had seen mackerel, the skipper called out. We got into oilskins and boots and made ready. Those who were going into the seine-boat had already picked out in what positions they were going to row, and now there was an overhauling of oars and putting marks on them so that they could be picked out in a hurry. Clancy and I were to be dorymen. We made ready the dory, and then Clancy went to the mast-head with the skipper and Long Steve, whose watch it was aloft.

Things began to look like business soon. Even from the deck we could see that one or two vessels ahead had boats out. We began to picture ourselves setting around a big school and landing the first mackerel of the year into New York. I think everybody aboard was having that dream, though everybody pretended not to be in earnest. You could hear them: "A nice school now—three hundred barrels." "Or two hundred would be doing pretty well." "Or even a hundred barrels wouldn't be bad." There were two or three young fellows among the crew, fellows like myself, who had never seen much seining, and they couldn't keep still for excitement when from the mast-head came the word that a boat ahead was out and making a set.

We were going along all the time and when we could see from the deck for ourselves the boats that were setting, Billie Hurd couldn't stand it any longer, but had to go aloft, too. The four of them made a fine picture—the skipper and Steve standing easily on the spreaders, one leaning against the mast and the other against the backstay, with Hurd perched on the jib halyards block and Clancy on the spring-stay, and all looking as comfortable as if they were in rockers at home. I'd have given a hundred dollars then to be able to stand up there on one foot and lean as easily as the skipper against the stay with the vessel going along as she was. I made up my mind to practise it when next I went aloft.

I went to the mast-head myself by and by, and, seeing half a dozen schools almost at once, I became so excited that I could hardly speak. The skipper was excited, too, but he didn't show it, only by his eyes and talking more jerkily than usual. He paid no attention to two or three schools that made me just crazy just to look at, but at last, when he thought it was time, he began to move. Ten or a dozen Gloucester vessels were bunched together, and one porgy steamer —that is, built for porgy or menhaden fishing, but just now trying for mackerel like the rest of us.

"There'll be plenty of them up soon, don't you think, Tommie?" the skipper asked.

"Plenty," answered Tommie, "plenty," with his eyes ever on the fish. "I think Sam Hollis has got his all right, but Pitt Ripley—I don't know."

It was getting well along toward sunset then, with everybody worried, the skipper still aloft, and one boat making ready to set about a mile inside of us. "They'll dive," said our skipper, and they did. "There's Pitt Ripley's school now," and he pointed to where a raft of mackerel were rising and rippling the water black, and heading for the north. "There's another gone down, too—they'll dive that fellow. Who is it—Al McNeill? —yes. But they'll come up again, and when it does, it's ours." And they did come up, and when they did the skipper made a jump and roared, "Into the boat!" There was a scramble. "Stay up here, you Billie, and watch the school," he said to Hurd, and "Go down, you," to me. I slid down by the jib halyards. The skipper and Clancy came down by the back-stay and beat me to the deck. They must have tumbled down, they were down so quick.

"Hurry—the Aurora's going after it, too." The Aurora was one of Withrow's fleet and we were bound to beat her. I had hardly time to

leap into the dory after Clancy, and we were off, with nobody left aboard but Hurd to the masthead and the cook, who was to stay on deck and sail the vessel.

In the seine-boat it was double-banked oars, nine long blades and a monstrous big one steering —good as another oar that—and all driving for dear life, with Long Steve and a cork-passer standing by the seine and the skipper on top of it, with his eyes fixed on the school ahead—his only motions to open his mouth and to wave with his hands to the steersman behind him. "Drive her—drive her," he called to the crew. "More yet—more yet," to the steering oar. "There's the porgy steamer's boat, too, after the same school. Drive her now, fellows!"

The mackerel were wild as could be, great rafts of them, and travelling faster than the old seiners in the gang said they had ever seen them travel before, and what was worse, not staying up long. There were boats out from three or four vessels before we pushed off with ours. I remember the porgy steamer had cut in ahead and given their boat a long start for a school. However, that school did not stay up long enough and they had their row for nothing. But then their steamer picked them up again and dropped them on the way to the same school that we were trying for.

How some of our gang did swear at them! And all because they were steam power.

It promised to be a pretty little race, but that school, too, went down before either of us could head it, and so it was another row for nothing. We lay on our oars then, both boats ready for another row, with the skipper and seine-heaver in each standing on top of the seine and watching for the fish to show again. Of course both gangs were sizing each other up, too. I think myself that the Duncan's crowd were a huskier lot of men than the steamer's. Our fellows looked more like fishermen, as was to be expected, because in Gloucester good fishermen are so common that naturally, a man hailing from there gets so that he wants to be a good fisherman, too, and of course the men coming there are all pretty good to begin with, leaving out the fellows who are born and brought up around Gloucester and who have it in their blood. A man doesn't leave Newfoundland or Cape Breton or even Nova Scotia or Maine and the islands along the coast, or give up any safe, steady work he may have, to come to Gloucester to fish unless he feels that he can come pretty near to holding his end up. That's not saying that a whole lot of fine fishermen do not stay at home, with never any desire to fish out of Gloucester, in spite of the good money that a fish-

erman with a good skipper can make from there, but just the same they're a pretty smart and able lot that do come. And so, while our gang was half made up of men that were born far away from Gloucester, yet they had the Gloucester spirit, which is everything in deep-sea fishing, when nerve and strength and skill count for so much. And this other crowd—the porgy steamer's—did not have that look.

"Look at what we're coming to," somebody called. "All steam boys soon, and on wages—wages!" he repeated, "and going around the deck, with a blue guernsey with letters on the chest of it—A.D.Q.—or some other damn company."

"Well, that would not be bad either, with your grub bill sure and your money counted out at the end of every month," answered somebody else.

I was sizing up the two gangs myself, I being in the dory with Clancy, and I guess that nearly everyone of us was doing the same thing and keeping an eye out for fish at the same time, when all at once a school popped up the other side of the porgyman's boat. Perhaps, half a mile it was and, for a wonder, not going like a streak.

We saw it first and got to going first, but the Aurora's boat and the steamer's boat were nearer, and so when we were all under good headway there were two lengths or so that we had to make

up on each. Well, that was all right. Two lengths weren't so many, and we drove her. It was something to see the fellows lay out to it then—doubled-banked, two men to each wide seat and each man with a long oar, which he had picked out and trimmed to suit himself, and every man in his own particular place as if in a racing crew.

And now every man was bending to it. A big fellow, named Rory McKinnon, was setting the stroke. There was a kick and a heave to every stroke, and the men encouraging each other. "Now—now—give it to her," was all that I could hear coming out of him. All this time we in the dory were coming on behind, Clancy and I having to beat their dory just as our boat had to beat their boat. And we were driving, too, you may be sure. Clancy was making his oars bend like whips. "Blast 'em! There's no stiffness to 'em," he was complaining. And then, "Sock it to her," he would call out to our fellows in the seine-boat. "We've got the porgy crew licked—that's the stuff," came from the skipper. From on top of the seine he was watching the fish, watching the gang, watching the other boats, watching us in the dory—watching everything. Whoever made a slip then would hear from it afterwards, we knew. And clip, clip, clip it was, with the swash

just curling nicely under the bow of the other boat, and I suppose our own, too, if we could have seen.

Our boat was gaining on the Aurora's and the skipper was warming up. The fish was going the same way we were, still a quarter of a mile ahead.

"Drive her," said the skipper. "Drive her—drive her—another length and you got 'em. And, Kenney, it's the best of ash you've got. Don't be afraid of breaking it. And, Dan Burns, didn't y'ever learn to keep stroke in the Bay of Islands with nine more men beside you rowing? And drive her—hit her up now—here's where we got 'em—they can't hold it on their lives. Now then, another dozen strokes and it's over. One, two, three—quicker, Lord, quicker—six, seven—oh, now she's fair flying—look at her leap. You blessed lobster, keep rowing and not looking over your shoulder. We got to get the fish first."

A quarter mile of that with the foam ripping by us, and every man with his blood like fire jumping to his oar, when the skipper leaped back to the steering oar. "Stand by," he called, and then, "Now—over with the buoy," and over it went, with the dory at hand and Tommie Clancy right there to pick it up and hold it to windward. And then went the seine over in huge armfuls. Just to see Long Steve throw that seine was worth

a trip South. And he was vain as a child of his strength and endurance. "My, but look at him!" Clancy called out—"look at the back of him!" "He's a horse," somebody else would have to say, and "H-g-gh," Steve would grunt, and "H-g-gh" he would fill the air full of tarred netting, "H-g-gh—pass them corks," and over it would go, "H-g-gh," and the skipper would say, "That's the boy, Steve," and Steve would heave to break his back right then and there. All the time they were driving the seine-boat to its limit, and the skipper was laying to the big steering oar, the longest of them all and taking a strong man to handle it properly—laying to it, swinging from the waist like a hammer-thrower, and the boat jumping to it. She came jumping right for us in the dory in a little while. It doesn't take a good gang long to put a quarter mile of netting around a school of mackerel.

It was a pretty set he made. "Pretty, pretty," you could almost hear the old seiners saying between their teeth, even as they were all rowing with jaws set and never a let-up until the circle was completed, when it was oars into the air and Clancy leaping from the dory into the seine-boat to help purse up. "It's a raft if ever we get 'em," were his first words, and everybody that wasn't too breathless said yes, it was a jeesly raft of fish.

"Purse in," it was then, and lively. And so we pursed in, hauling on the running line in the lower edge of the seine, something as the string around the neck of a tobacco bag is drawn tight. It was heavy work of course, but everybody made light of it. We could not tell if the fish were in it or not. The leaders might have dove when they felt the twine against their noses and so escaped with the whole school following after, or they might have taken no alarm and stayed in.

So we pursed in, not knowing whether we were to have a good haul with a hundred or a hundred and fifty dollars apiece at the end of it, or whether we would have our work for nothing. All hands kept up the pretence of joking, of course, but everybody was anxious enough. It was more than the money—it was fisherman's pride. Were we to get into New York and have it telegraphed on to Gloucester for everybody that knew us to read and talk about—landing the first mackerel of the year? We watched while the circle narrowed and the pool inside grew shallower. Somebody said, "There's one," and we could see the shine of it, and another—and another—and then the whole mass of them rose flipping. They lashed the water into foam, rushed around the edges, nosed the corks of the seine. I don't think myself that mackerel are particularly intelligent, take them

generally; but at times they seem to know—these fellows, at least, seemed to know they were gone and they thrashed about in fury. A mackerel is a handsome fish any time, but to see him right you want to see him fresh-seined. They whipped the water white now—tens of thousands of them. I don't believe that the oldest seiner there didn't feel his heart beat faster—the first mackerel of the year. "And Lord knows, maybe a couple of hundred barrels," and the skipper's eyes shone—it meant a lot to him. And some of the men began to talk like children, they were so pleased.

X

WE LOSE OUR SEINE

TWO hundred barrels the skipper had said, but long before we were all pursed up we knew that five hundred barrels would never hold the fish in that seine. The size of that school filled us with joy and yet it was the very size of it that caused us our trouble. It was too big for the seine, and when they began to settle down and take the twine with them the trouble began for us. No bit of twine ever made to be handled from a seine-boat was big enough to hold that school of fish when they began to go down.

The skipper was awake to it early and signalled for the vessel to come alongside. So the Johnnie stood over to us, and Hurd, pushing the spare dory over with Moore's help, came jumping with it to the side of the seine where I was alone in the first dory. He hadn't even stopped to get into his oil-skins, he was in such a hurry. By the skipper's orders I had made fast some of the corks to the thwarts in the dory and Billie took some into the spare dory. The whole length of the seine-boat they were making fast the seine too. In that way

the skipper hoped to buoy up the fish and hold them until we could lighten the seine up by bailing some of the fish onto the deck of the vessel. But it was of no use. There must have been a thousand barrels of them, and dories and seine-boat began to go under. It was over the rail of my dory and spare dory both, and both Billie and myself to our waists, when the skipper sung out for us to jump and save ourselves. We hung on a little longer, but it got to be too much for us and overboard we went. We were not in danger then. It is true that the sea was making and we were weighted down with oilskins and rubber boots, but we had for support the corks that had not yet gone under. And along the corks we hauled ourselves toward the seine-boat. I was praying that the sharks that sometimes follow up mackerel would not bother us. It is probable that they would not even if there were any around, as mackerel are better eating. And such a fuss as we made hauling ourselves through the water! We'd have scared away a whole school of sharks. Before we could get to the seine-boat that, too, was under. "Jump!" called the skipper, and "Jump everybody!" called Clancy, and themselves both hanging on to a last handful of twine. The men in the seine-boat jumped and struck out for the vessel, which was now quite close, with the cook, the only

man left aboard, throwing over keelers, drawbuckets, the main sheet—anything within his reach that was loose and would support a man.

The skipper and Clancy hung on to the last. "Jump you, Tommie!" called the skipper. "Not me till you go," answered Clancy. They couldn't do a bit of good, but they hung on, each grabbing handfuls of twine in a last effort to hold up the seine. The seine-boat went under—and they up to their necks—and then it turned over and in toward the seine. Some of us hollered—we were afraid that it was all up with both of them—that they would be thrown toward the inside and tangled up in the seine. But both of them bobbed up, the skipper saying nothing, but Clancy sputtering like a crazy man. The dories coming loose gave a few of us a chance to climb up on the bottom of them, and when the seine-boat came bobbing up most of the others climbed up on the bottom of that. And there was some swearing done then, you may be sure! The gang would have been all right then, waiting to be picked up by the cook from the vessel, which was then pretty handy; but the seine-boat started to go under again and then came the slap of a little sea, and overboard went seven or eight of us. Clancy was one of those thrown into the water. We all remembered it afterwards because he called out for Andie Howe.

"Where's Andie?"

"Here," said Andie.

"Where?"

"Hanging onto the bow of the seine-boat."

"Well, hang on a while longer," said Clancy and struck out for the vessel, and made it too, oilskins, big boots and all. He threw two or three lines out at once—one especially to Thad Simpson, the other man of the crew besides Andie Howe who it was known couldn't swim. So Clancy hauled him in. The third man he hauled in was Billie Hurd.

"Good Lord, Tommie," said Billie, "you hove a line over my head to Andie Howe."

"You pop-eyed Spanish mackerel!" roared Clancy at him, "you ought to know by this time that Andie can't swim."

"I know, but he was all oiled up, and look at me——"

"Go to hell," said Clancy.

We all got aboard after a while, but our fine new seine was gone, and the big school of fish too. After a hard grapple we got the dories and a little later the seine-boat, and after a lot more work we got them right side up. The dories we pulled the plugs out of to let them drain and then took them on deck, but the seine-boat we had to pump out. By then it was pretty well on in the night and I remember how the moon rose just as we had

it fairly well dried out and dropped astern—rose as big as a barrel-head and threw a yellow light over it, and then went out of sight, for a breeze was on us.

And "Oh, Lord! that thousand-barrel school!" groaned everybody.

XI

AN OVER-NIGHT BREEZE

IT wasn't bad enough that we came near losing a few men and our boat, and our seine altogether, but it must come on to breeze up on top of that and drive us off the grounds. After putting everything to rights, we were having a mug-up forward and wondering if the skipper would take sail off her or what, when we heard the call that settled it.

"On deck everybody!" we heard. And when we got there, came from the skipper, "Take in the balloon, tie it up and put it below. Haul down your stays'l too—and go aloft a couple of you, fore and aft, and put the tops'ls in gaskets."

We attended to that—a gang out on the bowsprit, half a dozen aloft and so on—with the skipper to the wheel while it was being done. When we had finished it was, "Haul the seine-boat alongside—pump out what water's left." Then, "Shift that painter and hook on the big painter. Drop her astern and give her plenty of line. Where's the dory-men? Where's Tommie and Joe? Haul the dories into the hatch, Tommie, and make 'em

fast. Gripe 'em good while you're at it. Clear the deck of all loose gear—put it below, all of it—keelers, everything. Maybe 'twon't be much of a blow, but there's no telling—it may. She mayn't be the kind that washes everything over, but put it all safe anyway."

The skipper watched all this until he had seen everything cleared up and heard "All fast the dory," from the waist. Then he looked up and took note of sky and wind. "Don't feel any too good. Maybe 'twill blow off, but we might's well run in. We'll have to wait for our other seine anyway and Wesley will be sure to put into the Breakwater for news on his way down, especially if it comes to blow."

He dropped below then to light his pipe. Seeing me and Parsons, with me trying to fix up Parsons's leg where it had been gashed—Eddie never knew how—in the mix-up of the evening, the skipper said, "There's some liniment in the chest and some linen in one of the drawers under my bunk. Get it. And some of you might's well turn in and have a nap. She'll be all right—the watch and myself can look after her now," and he went on deck again, puffing like an engine to keep his pipe going.

Most of them did turn in and were soon asleep. Some of the older men had a smoke and an over-

hauling of their wet clothes, while a few joined in a little game of draw before turning in. One or two were deploring the loss of the seine. The nearness to losing lives didn't seem to be worrying anybody. For myself, I was somewhat worked up. There was one time in the water when I thought I was gone. So I went on deck after the skipper. It was a black night and breezing all the time and I wanted to see how the vessel behaved. The Johnnie was close-hauled at this time and swashing under, and I knew without asking further that the skipper intended to make Delaware Breakwater.

While hurrying forward, after lending a hand to batten down the main hatch—the Johnnie plunging along all the time—and my head perhaps a little too high in the air, I stumbled off the break and plump over a man under the windward rail. I thought I was going to leeward and maybe overboard, but somebody hooked onto the full in the back of my oil-jacket, hauled me up the inclined deck again, and in a roaring whisper said, "Get a hold here, Joey—here's a ring-bolt for you. Don't let go on your life! Isn't it fine?" It was Clancy. He had nights, I know, when he couldn't sleep, and like me, I suppose, he wanted to watch the sea, which just then was firing grandly. Into this sea the vessel was diving—nose first—bring-

ing her bowsprit down, down, down, and then up, up, up, until her thirty-seven-foot bowsprit would be pointing to where the North star should be. Whenever she heaved like that I could feel her deck swelling under me. I remember when I used to play foot-ball at the high school at home and it was getting handy to a touch-down, with perhaps only a few yards to gain and the other side braced to stop it, that a fellow playing back had to buck like that from under a line when he had to scatter tons, or what he thought was tons, of people on top of him. The vessel was that way now, only with every dive she had hundreds of tons to lift from under. At a time like that you can feel the ribs of a vessel brace within her just as if she was human. Now I could almost feel her heart pumping and her lungs pounding somewhere inside. I could feel her brace to meet it, feel her shiver, as if she was scared half to death, and almost hear her screech like a winner every time she cleared it and threw it over her head.

Now down she went—the Johnnie Duncan—down and forward, for she wouldn't be held back—shoulders and breast slap into it. Clear to her waist she went, fighting the sea from her. To either side were tumbling the broken waves, curling away like beach combers. The hollow of each was a curved sheet of electric white, and the top—the

crest—was a heavier, hotter white. The crests would rise above our rail and break, and back into the hollows would fall a shower of shooting stars that almost sizzled. There wasn't a star above, but millions on the water!

"Ever see anything like that ashore, Joey-boy?" said Clancy, and I had to roar a whisper that I never had.

Through this play of fire the Johnnie leaped with great bounds. She boiled her way, and astern she left a wake in which the seine-boat was rearing and diving with a fine little independent trail of its own.

Two men forward—the watch—were leaning over the windlass and peering into the night. They were there for whatever they might see, but particularly were they looking for the double white light of Five Fathom Bank lightship. The skipper was at the wheel. When he got in the way of the cabin light, we could catch the shine from his dripping oil-clothes, and the spark from his pipe—which he kept going through it all—marked his position when he stepped back into the darkness.

Clancy noticed him. "There's a man for you, Joey. Think what it meant to a young skipper with a new vessel—the loss of that school and the seine on top of it the very first day he struck fish. If we'd got that, he might have been the first vessel

of the year into the New York market. And think of the price the first fish fetch!—and the honor of it—and he breaking his heart to make a reputation this year. And yet not a yip out of him—not a cranky word to one of the gang all night. A great man I call him—and a fisherman." I thought so, too.

Sometimes I imagined I could see the wink of red and green lights abreast and astern, which I probably did, for there should have been fifty sail or so of seiners inside and outside of us—there were sixty sail of the fleet in sight that afternoon—and I knew that, barring a possible few that had got fish and were driving for the New York market, all the others were like ourselves, under lower sails and boring into it, with extra lookout forward, the skipper at the wheel or on the quarter and all ears and eyes for the surf and lights inshore when we should get there.

"Something ahead! dead ahead! sa-ail!" came suddenly from forward. There was a scraping of boot-heels at the wheel. "What d'y'make of it?—all right, I see her!" In the shadow we saw the skipper pulling the wheel down. Ahead I imagined I saw a dark patch, but to make sure I squirmed up to the fore-rigging. Whoever she was, the light from her cabin skylight was right there and I realized that we were pretty close, but

not really how close until a boat bobbed up under my jaws almost. Right from under our bow it heaved. It was a seiner and that was her seine-boat towing astern, and I could easily have heaved a line to her helmsman as we swept by her. There was an awfully tall shadow of sails—half up to the clouds I thought—and the black of the hull looked as long as a dock. A voice was hurled to us, but we couldn't quite make it out—but it was the watch, probably, saying a word or two by way of easing his feelings.

We worked up to the windward of that one and slowly crowded past her tumbling green light. Then the skipper let the wheel fly up and we shot ahead and soon we had her directly astern, with her one green and one red eye looking after us. "That's one fellow we outsail," thought I to myself, and I knew I was beginning to love the Johnnie Duncan.

All through that night it went on like that.

At four o'clock or so in the morning the cook stuck his head out of the slit in the forec's'le companionway and spoke his welcome little piece. "Can't have any reg'lar sit-down this morning, boys. Have to leave the china in the becket for a while yet, but all that wants can make a mug-up, and when we get inside—if we do in anything like a decent hour—we'll have breakfast."

At five o'clock the sky began to brighten to the eastward, but there was no let-up to the wind or sea. If anything it was breezing up. At six o'clock, when the short blasts of the lightship split the air abreast of us, things were good and lively, but there was no daylight to go by then. The wash that in the night only buried her bow good was then coming over her to the foremast and filling the gangway between the house and rail as it raced aft. The beauty of double-lashing the dories began to appear, and all hands might have been towing astern all night by the look of them. But the Johnnie Duncan was doing well and the opinion of the crew generally was that the skipper could slap every rag to her and she'd carry it—that is, if she had to. The skipper put her more westerly after we had passed the lightship and on we went.

We had the company of a couple of coasters in this part of the drive; and by that, if nothing else, a man might know we were inshore. Some Gloucester men were in sight, too, though most of the fleet, we guessed, were still outside of us. The coasters were colliers, three-masters both, and reefed down, wallowing in the sea. One had her foretopmast snapped short off, and such patched sails as she had on looked lonesome. The gang, of course, had to make fun of her.

"There's one way to house a topm'st!"

"Broke your clothes-pole, old girl!"

"Better take in your washing there—looks like rain!"

"Go it, you beauty! I only wish I had my cameraw. If y'only suspected how lovely you look!"

Two big ocean tugs, one clear white and one all black, offered a change in looks, though in nothing else, for each one, with two barges of coal, was making desperate hauling of it, and the Breakwater yet a good bit away.

"Hustle 'em, you husky coal-jammers!" roared Parsons at them, as if he could be heard beyond the rail. "I wouldn't be aboard of you for my share of the Southern trip—and mackerel away up in G, too. Would you, Billie?"

"Then? Naw!" said Hurd, with a wrinkling of his little nose.

"No, nor me neither," said Long Steve. "Hi—ever hear the cook—ever hear George Moore's song:—

'If ever you go to sea, my boy,
Don't ever you ship on a steamer;
There's stacks to scrape and rails to paint—
It's always work to clean her.
When the wind is wrong and the shore is by,
They'll keep you clear of leeway,
But they roll and they jolt and they're never dry—
They're the devil's own in a sea-way!'"

Steve, trying to sing that, had one hand hooked into a ring-bolt under the rail and he was slowly pickling—we were all pickling—like a salted mackerel in a barrel.

An hour past Five Fathom and the tall white tower of Cape Henlopen could be made out ahead, as well as the gray tower of Cape May through the mists to the northward. The wind was coming faster and it felt heavier. We could judge best of how we were looking ourselves by watching all our fellows near by. We could see to the bottom planks of two to leeward of us, while on the sloping deck of one to windward it was plain that only what was lashed or bolted was still there. When they reared they almost stood up straight, and when they scooped into it the wonder was that all the water taken aboard didn't hold her until the next comber could have a fair whack at her.

The men—that is, a few of them—might joke, but were all glad to be getting in. There's no fun staying wet and getting wetter all night long. If it wasn't for the wetness of a fellow it would have been great, for it was the finest kind of excitement, our running to harbor—that night—especially in the morning when we were passing three or four and nobody passing us. We went by one fellow—the Martinet she was—a fair enough sailer—passed her to windward of course,

our gang looking across at their gang and nobody saying a word, but everybody thinking a lot, you may be sure. It was worth a square meal that.

With the Martinet astern, the skipper let her pay off and run for the end of the Breakwater. For a while he let the wind take her fair abeam, with sheets in, and the way she sizzled through the water was a caution. There was a moment that an extra good blast hit her that my heart sank, but I reflected that the skipper knew his business, and so tried to take it unconcernedly. Everybody around me was joking and laughing—to think, I suppose, that we would soon be in.

A moment after that I went down to leeward. The sea was bubbling in over her rail at the fore-rigging and I wanted to get the feel of it. I got it. It is pretty shoal water on the bar at the mouth of the Delaware River and quite a little sea on when it blows. One sea came aboard. Somebody yelled and I saw it—but too late—and slap! over I went—over the rail—big boots and oilskins I went down into the roaring. For a second my head came up and I saw the vessel. Everybody aboard was standing by. The skipper was whirling the spokes and the vessel was coming around like a top. I never saw a vessel roll down so far in all my life. I went under again and coming up heard a dull shout. There was a line beside

me. "Grab hold!" yelled somebody. No need to tell me—I grabbed hold. It was the seine-boat's painter. The Johnnie was still shooting and when the line tautened it came as near to pulling my arms out of my shoulders as ever I want to have them again. But I hung on. Then she came up, and they hauled the painter in and gaffed me over the rail.

"You blankety blank fool!" roared Clancy, as soon as I stood up—"don't you know any better? A fine thing we'd have to be telegraphing home, wouldn't it? Are you all right now?"

"All right," I said, and felt pretty cheap.

While being hauled in, knowing that I was safe, I had been thinking what a fine little adventure I'd have to tell when we got back to Gloucester, but after Clancy got through with me I saw that there were two ways to look at it. So I took my old place under the windward rail and didn't move from there again till it was time to take sail off her.

XII

THE FLEET RUNS TO HARBOR

NEARING the Breakwater we had more company. Other seiners, with boats astern and dories on deck, were coming in; jumbo, jib, fore and reefed main-sail generally, and all plunging gloriously with a harbor near at hand.

For the next few hours of that morning any watcher in the lighthouse on the Breakwater could have seen plenty of samples of clever seamanship. At our time we were only one of a half-dozen at the business of working around the jetty, some making for one end and some for the other. There was a great trying of tacks and some plain criticism of tactics and weatherly qualities. There was one who tried to cut in before he could quite make it. When he had to put back or run ashore and lose her, a great laugh went up, though there was nothing the matter with the try. He had only tried too much.

Eddie Parsons was the sharp critic. "Trying to beat out the fleet, hey? And with that old hooker? Nothing wrong with your nerve, old man, but some fine day, when there's a little wind stirring, you'll roll that tub over a little too far. That's

right—jam her up now! Think you got a steamboat? Wonder nobody ever told you about sailing a vessel. Come out of it, old man, and let her swing off."

We had yet to get in ourselves, and that we had the Johnnie Duncan to eat into the wind we were thankful. At last we were by and reaching down to the end of the jetty. We all began to feel good once we were sure of it. It was fine, too, to listen to Clancy as we got near. He was standing on the break, leaning against the weather rigging and looking forward.

"You'd think she'd been coming here for a hundred years, wouldn't you? Look at her point her nose now at that beacon—don't have to give this one the wheel at all. She's the girl. See her bow off now. Man, but she knows as well as you and me she'll be inside and snug's a kenched mackerel before long. Watch her kick into the wind now. Oh, she's the lady, this one. I've sailed many of them, but she's the queen of them all, this one."

A half dozen of lucky fellows were in before us. We drove in among them, under the bow of one and past the stern of another. They were all watching us, after the custom of the fleet in harbor. We knew this and behaved as smartly as we could without slopping over.

By and by our skipper picked out a place to his fancy. "Stand by halyards and down-hauls," was his warning.

"Ready—all ready."

"Ready with the anchor!"

"All ready the anchor, sir!"

"Down with your jib! Down with jumbo! Let go your fore halyards! Watch out now—ready—let go your anchor!"

Rattle—whizz—whir-r-r—splash! clink—and the Johnnie Duncan of Gloucester was safe to her mooring.

And not till then did our skipper, ten hours to the wheel, unclinch his grip, hook the becket to a spoke, slat his sou'wester on the wheel-box and ease his mind.

"Thank the Lord, there's a jeesly blow behind us. There's some outside'll wish they had a shore job before they get in. Hi, boys, when you get her tied up for'ard, better all go below and have a bite to eat. Let the mains'l stand and give it a chance to dry." Then he looked about him. "And I didn't notice that anybody passed us on the way." There was a whole lot in that last.

After eating a bite, I went over in the dory to the lighthouse on the jetty, where seamen's mail was taken care of. After leaving my letters I stopped to watch some of the fleet coming. It was

easy enough to pick them. The long, slick-looking, lively seine-boat in tow and the black pile of netting on deck told what they were, and they came jumping out of the mists in a way to make a man's heart beat.

There was a man standing on the jetty. He was master of a three-masted coaster, he told me. "You come off one of them Gloucester mackerel-catchers?" he asked me. I said yes. "That new-looking one that came in a while ago?" I said yes again.

"I was watching her—she's a dream—a dream. I never see anything like them—the whole bunch of 'em. Look at this one—ain't she got on about all she can stand up under though? My soul, ain't she staggering! I expect her skipper knows his business—don't expect he'd be skipper of a fine vessel like that if he didn't. But if 'twas me I'd just about take a wide tuck or two in that everlastin' mains'l he's got there. My conscience, but ain't he asockin' it to her! I s'pose that's the way some of your vessels are sailed out and never heard from again—that was never run into, nor rolled over, nor sunk in a reg'lar way, but just drove right into it head-first trying to make a passage and drowned before ever they could rise again. Well, good-luck to you, old girl, and your skipper, whoever he is, and I guess if your canvas

stays on you'll be to anchor before a great while, for you're making steamboat time. Go it, old girl, and your little baby on behind, go it! There ain't nothing short of an ocean liner could get you now. Go it! a sail or two don't matter—if it's a good mackerel season I s'pose the owners don't mind if you blow away a few sails. Go it, God bless you! Go it! you're the lads can sail a vessel, you fishermen of Gloucester. Lord, if I dared to try a thing like that with my vessel and my crew and the old gear I got, I rather expect I'd have a rigger's bill by the time I got home—if ever I got home carryin' on like that in my old hooker."

I watched her, too. She was the Tarantula, Jim Porter, another sail-carrier. Around the point and across she tore and over toward the sands beyond, swung off on her heel to her skipper's heave, came down by the wreck of a big three-master on the inner beach, and around and up opposite what looked like a building on the hill. Then it was down with the wheel, down with headsails, let go fore-halyards, over with the anchor, and there she was, another fisherman of Gloucester, at rest in harbor after an all-night fight with a lively breeze.

And I left the master of the coaster there and went back to the Duncan, where the crew were standing along the rail or leaning over the house and having a lot of fun sizing up those who were

coming in. It is one of the enjoyments of the seining fleet—this racing to harbor when it blows and then watching the others work in. I've heard it said that no place in the world can show a fleet like them—all fine vessels, from one hundred to one hundred and twenty feet over all, deep draught, heavily sparred, and provided with all kinds of sail. They were ably managed, of course, —and a dash to port makes the finest kind of a regatta. No better chances are offered to try vessels and seamanship—no drifting or flukes but wind enough for all hands and on all points of sailing generally.

They came swooping in one after the other—like huge sea-gulls, only with wings held close. Now, with plenty of light, those already in could easily see the others coming long before they rounded the jetty. Even if we couldn't see the hulls of them, there were fellows who could name them—one vessel after the other—just by the spars and upper rigging. The cut of a topsail, the look of a masthead, the set of a gaff—the smallest little thing was enough to place them, so well were they acquainted with one another. And the distance at which some of them could pick out a vessel was amazing.

George Moore, coming up out of the forec'sle to dump over some scraps, spied one. "The Mary

Grace Adams," he sang out,—"the shortest forem'st out of Gloucester. She must've been well inside when she started—to get in at this time. Slow—man, but she is slow, that one."

"Yes, that's the old girl, and behind her is the Dreamer—Charlie Green—black mastheads and two patches on her jumbo. She'll be in and all fast before the Mary Grace's straightened out."

And so it was—almost. The Mary Adams was one of the older fleet and never much of a sailer. The Dreamer was one of the newer vessels, able, and a big sailer. They were well raked by the critics, as under their four lowers they whipped in and around and passed on by.

After the Dreamer came the Madeline, with "Black Jack" Hogan, a fleshy man for a fisherman, who minded his way and remained unmoved at the compliments paid his vessel, one of the prize beauties of the fleet. The Marguerite, Charley Falvey, a dog at seining, always among the high-liners, who got more fun out of a summer's seining than most men ever got out of yachting, who bought all the latest inventions in gear as fast as they came out and who had a dainty way of getting fish. The Marguerite dipped her bow as she passed, while her clever skipper nodded along the line.

The King Philip, another fast beauty, made her

bow and dipped her jibs to her mates in harbor. At sight of her master, Al McNeill, a great shout goes up. "Ho, ho! boys, here's Lucky Al! Whose seine was it couldn't hold a jeesly big school one day off here last spring but Billie Simms'? Yes, sir, Billie Simms. Billie fills up and was just about thinking he'd have to let the rest go when who heaves in sight and rounds to and says, 'Can I help y'out, William?' Who but Lucky Al McNeill, of course. Bales out two hundred barrels as nice fat mackerel as anybody'd want to see. 'Just fills me up,' says Al, and scoots to market. Just been to New York, mind you, that same week with two hundred and fifty barrels he got twelve cents apiece for. 'Just fills me up,' says Al, and scoots. No, he ain't a bit lucky, Captain Al ain't—married a young wife only last fall."

Then followed the Albatross, with Mark Powers giving the orders. Then the Privateer, another fast one, but going sluggishly now because of a stove-in seine-boat wallowing astern. Then the North Wind, with her decks swept clear of everything but her house and hatches. Seine-boat, seine and dory were gone.

After her was a big, powerful vessel, the Ave Maria, with the most erratic skipper of all. This man never appeared but the gossip broke out. Andie Howe had his record. "Here comes George

Ross. What's this they say now?—that he don't come down from the mast-head now like he used to, when he strikes a school. When I was with him he was a pretty lively man comin' from aloft—used to sort of fall down, you know. But now he comes down gentle-like—slides down the back-stay. Only trouble now he's got to get new rubber boots every other trip, 'count of the creases he wears in the legs of them sliding down the wire. I tell you they all lose their nerve as they get older. There's Billie Simms coming behind him. He's given up tryin' to sail his vessel on the side and tryin' to see how long he c'n carry all he c'n pile on. Billie says 't'ain't like when a fellow's young and ain't got any family. I expect it's about the same with George since he got married." The master of the Ave Maria didn't even glance over as he piloted his vessel along. He very well knew that we were talking about him.

Pretty soon came one that everybody looked at doubtfully. She sported a new mainmast and a new fore-gaff. "Who's this old hooker with her new spars? Looks like a vessel just home from salt fishing, don't she? Lord, but she needs painting." Nobody seemed to know who she was, and as she got nearer there was a straining of eyes for her name forward. "The H-A-R-B-I—oh, the Harbinger. Must be old Marks and the old craft he

bought down East last fall. This the old man, of course—the Harbinger. How long's she been down here? Came down ahead of the fleet? Well, she ought to—by the looks of her she needs a good early start to get anywhere. They ought to be glad to get in. I mind that September breeze twenty year ago that the old man said blew all the water off Quero and drove him ashore on Sable Island. He says he ain't taking any more line storms in his. No, nor anybody else in the old square-enders he gen'rally sails in. I'll bet he's glad to change winter trawling for summer seining. I'll bet he put in a few wakeful nights on the Banks in his time—mind the time he parted his cable and came bumping over Sable Island No'the-east Bar? Found the only channel there was, I callate. 'Special little angels was looking out for me,' he says, when he got home. 'Yes,' says Wesley Marrs—he was telling it to Wesley—'yes,' says Wesley, 'but I'll bet keepin' the lead goin' had a hell of a lot to do with it, too.' "

So they came rolling in by the end of the jetty until they could make one last tack of it. Like tumbling dolphins they were—seiners all, with a single boat towing astern and a single dory, or sometimes two dories, lashed in the waist, all gear stowed away, under four lower sails mostly—jumbo, jib, fore and main, though now and then

was one with a mainsail in stops and a trysail laced to the gaff, and all laying down to it until their rails were washing under and the sea hissed over the bows.

Anybody would have to admire them as they came scooting past. When they thought they were close enough to the Breakwater—and some went pretty close—up or down would go the wheel, according to which end of the jetty they came in by, around they would go, and across the flats and down on the fleet they would come shooting. They breasted into the hollows like any sea-bird and lifted with every heave to shake the water from bilge to quarter. They came across with never a let-up, shaving everything along the way until a good berth was picked out. Then they let go sails, dropped anchor and were ready for a rest.

Nobody got by our fellows without a word. And we weren't the only crew of critics. Bungling seamanship would get a slashing here, but there was none of that. It was all good, but there are degrees of goodness, of course. First-class seamanship being a matter of course, only a wonderful exhibition won approval from everybody. And crews coming in, knowing what was ahead of them, made no mistakes in that harbor.

A dozen ordinary skippers sailed past before a famous fisherman at length came in. Everybody

knew him—a dog, a high-liner, truly a master mariner. A murmur went up. "There's the boy," said Tommie Clancy. "I mind last summer when he came into Souris just such a day as this, but with more wind stirring. 'Twas Fourth of July and we had all our flags to the peak—and some fine patriotic fights going on ashore that day—our flag and the English. The harbor was jammed with seiners and fresh-fishers. You couldn't see room for a dory, looking at 'em end on. But that don't jar Tom O'Donnell. What does he do? He just comes in and sails around the fleet like a cup-defender on parade—and every bit of canvas he had aboard flying—only his crew had to hang onto the ring-bolts under the wind'ard rail. Well, he comes piling in, looks the fleet over, sizes up everything, picks out a nice spot as he shoots around, sails out the harbor again—clean out, yes sir, clean out—comes about—and it blowing a living gale all the time—shoots her in again, dives across a line of us, and fetches her up standing. We could've jumped from our rail to his in jack-boots, he was that close to us and another fellow the other side. Slid her in like you slide the cover into a diddy box. Yes, sir, and that's the same lad you see coming along now—Tom O'Donnell and his Colleen Bawn."

He certainly was coming on now, and a fine

working vessel he had. She showed it in every move. She came around like a twin-screw launch, picked out her berth like she had intelligence in her eyes, made for it, swirled, fluttered like a bird, felt with her claws for the ground underneath, found it, gripped it, swayed, hung on, and at last settled gently in her place. There was no more jar to the whole thing than if she had been a cat-boat in a summer breeze. "Pretty, pretty, pretty," you could hear the gang along our rail.

"They talk about knockabout racing craft," said Clancy, "but did y'ever see anything drop to a berth slicker than that? And that's a vessel you c'n go to sea in, and in the hardest winter gale that ever blew you c'n turn in when your watch is done and have a feeling of comfort."

"Where's the steam trawler, the porgy boat, we saw yesterday?"

"Put into Chincoteague most likely—nearer than here."

"That's what we'll have to come to yet—steamers, and go on wages like a waiter in a hotel."

"Yes," said Clancy, "I s'pose so, but with vessels like we got and the seamen sailing out of Gloucester we'll stave 'em off a long time yet, and even as it is, give me a breeze and a vessel like this one under us and we'll beat out all the steam fishermen that ever turned a screw."

One of the latest experiments in a fishermen's model reached in then and her coming started a chorus. They were always trying new models in Gloucester, everybody was so anxious to have a winner. This one's sails were still white and pretty and her hull still shiny in fresh black paint. The red stripe along her rail and the gold stripe along her run set off her lines; her gear didn't have a speck on it, her spars were yellow as could be and to leeward we thought we could still smell the patent varnish. For that matter there were several there as new-looking as she was, our own vessel for one; but there had been a lot of talk about this one. She was going to clean out the fleet. She had been pretending to a lot, and as she hadn't yet made good, of course she got a great raking.

"She's here at last, boys—the yacht, the wonderful, marvellous Victory! Ain't she a bird? Built to beat the fleet! Look at the knockabout bow of her!"

"Knockabout googleums—h-yah! Scoop shovel snout and a stern ugly as a battle-ship's, and the Lord knows there was overhang and to spare to tail her out decent. Cut out the yellow and the red and the whole lot of gold decorations and she's as homely as a Newf'undland jack."

"Just the same, she c'n sail," said somebody who wanted to start an argument.

"Sail! Yah! might beat a Rockport granite sloop. Ever hear of the Henry Clay Parker, Mister Billie Simms, and the little licking she gave this winner of yours? No? Well, you want to go around and have a drink or two with the boys next time you're ashore and get the news. It was like a dog-fish and a mackerel—the Henry just eat her up. And there's the others. Why, this one underneath us'd make a holy show of her, I'll bet. And there's half a dozen others. There's the—oh, what's the use?"

"Oh, Eddie Parsons, a perfect lady and coming in like a high-stepper and yet you must malign her beauty and make light of her virtue," and Clancy jammed Parsons's sou'wester down over his eyes—"hush up, Eddie."

Into the harbor and after the Victory heaved another one. And she was the real thing—handsome, fast and able. And she had a record for bringing the fish home—an able vessel and well-known for it. She could carry whole sails when some of the others were double-reefed and thinking of dragging trysails out of the hold. And her skipper was a wonder.

"You c'n cut all the others out—here comes the real thing. Here's the old dog himself. Did he ever miss a blow? And look at him. Every man comes in here to-day under four lowers, no more,

and some under reefed mains'l, or trys'l, but four whole lowers ain't enough for this gentleman—not for Wesley. He must carry that gaff-tops'l if he pulls the planks out of her. He always brings her home, but if some of the underwriters'd see him out here they'd soon blacklist him till he mended his ways. It's a blessed wonder he ain't found bottom before this. Look at her now skating on her ear. There she goes—if they'd just lower a man over the weather rail with a line on him he could write his name on her keel!"

And she certainly was something to make a man's eyes stick out. There had been a vessel or two that staggered before, but the Lucy fairly rolled down into it, and there was no earthly reason why she should do it except that it pleased her skipper to sport that extra kite.

She boiled up from the end of the jetty, and her wake was the wake of a screw steamer. She had come from home, we knew, and so it happened she was one of the last to get in. The harbor was crowded as she straightened out. We knew she would not have too much leeway coming on, and what berth she was after kept everybody guessing.

"If she goes where's she pointing—and most vessels do—she'll find a berth down on the beach on that course, down about where the wreck is. It'll be dry enough walking when she gets there.

If she keeps on the gait she's going now, she ought to be able to fetch good and high and dry up on the mud. They'd cert'nly be able to step ashore—when they get there. Ah-h-h, but that's more like it."

She was taking it over the quarter then. She cleared the stern of the most leeward of the fleet and then kicked off, heading over to where the Johnnie Duncan and the Victory lay. The betting was that she would round to and drop in between us two. There was room there, but only just room. It would be a close fit, but there was room.

But she didn't round to. She held straight on without the sign of a swerve. On the Johnnie, the gang being almost in her path picked out a course for her. Between the outer end of our seine-boat and the end of the bowsprit of the Mary Grace Adams was a passage that may have been the width of a vessel. But the space seemed too narrow. Our crew were wondering if he would try it. Even the skipper, standing in the companion-way, stepped up on deck to have a better look.

"He's got to take it quarterin', and it ain't wide enough," said Eddie Parsons.

"Quartering—yes, but with everything hauled inboard," said the skipper. "He'll try it, I guess. I was with him for two years, and if he feels like trying it he'll try it."

"And s'pose he does try it, Skipper?"

"Oh, he'll come pretty near making it, though he stands a good chance to scrape the paint off our seine-boat going by. No, don't touch the seine-boat—let her be as she is. We'll fool 'em if they think they c'n jar anybody here coming on like that. There's room enough if nothing slips, and if they hit it's their look-out."

It looked like a narrow space for a vessel of her beam to go through, but she hopped along, and the eyes of all the harbor followed her to the point where she must turn tail or make the passage.

She held on—her chance to go back was gone.

"Watch her, boys. Now she's whooping—look at her come!"

And she was coming. Her windward side was lifted so high that her bottom planks could be seen. Her oil-skinned crew were crowded forward. There were men at the fore-halyards, at jib-halyards, at the down-hauls, and a group were standing by the anchor. Two men were at the wheel.

She bit into it. There was froth at her mouth. She was so near now that we could read the faces of her crew; and wide awake to this fine seamanship we all leaned over the rail, the better to see how she'd make out. The crews of half the vessels inside the Breakwater were watching her.

She was a length away and jumping to it. It was yet in doubt, but she was certainly rushing to some sort of a finish. She rushed on, and w-r-r-rp! her weather bow came down on the Johnnie's seine-boat. But it didn't quite hit it. Her quarter to leeward just cut under the Adams' bowsprit and the leech of her mainsail seemed to flatten past. For a moment we were not certain, but no jolt or lurch came and our seine-boat seemed all right. Another jump and she was clear by. And then we felt like cheering her, and her skipper Wesley Marrs, too, as he stood to the wheel and sung out, "Couldn't scare you, could I, Maurice. I thought you'd haul your seine-boat in. I've got your extra seine," and swept by.

From our deck and from the deck of the Adams, and from the decks of half a dozen others, could be heard murmurs, and there was a general pointing out of the redoubtable skipper himself to the green hands that knew him only by reputation. "That's him, Wesley himself—the stocky little man of the two at the wheel."

If the stocky little man heard the hails that were sent after him, he made no sign, unless a faint dipping of his sou'wester back over his windward shoulder was his way of showing it.

He had business yet, had Wesley Marrs. There was a tug and a barge and another big seiner in

his course. He clipped the tug, scraped the barge, and set the seiner's boat a-dancing, and two lengths more he put down the wheel and threw her gracefully into the wind. Down came jib, down came jumbo, over splashed the anchor. She ran forward a little, rattled back a link or two, steadied herself, and there she was. Her big mainsail was yet shaking in the wind, her gaff-topsail yet fluttering aloft, but she herself, the Lucy Foster of Gloucester, was at your service. "And what do you think of her, people?" might just as well have been shot off her deck through a megaphone, for that was what her bearing and the unnatural smartness of her crew plainly were saying.

We all drew breath again. Clancy unbent from the rail and shook his head in high approval. He took off his sou'wester, slatted it over the after-bitt to clear the brim of water, and spoke his mind. "You'll see nothing cleaner than that in this harbor to-day, fellows, and you'll see some pretty fair work at that. That fellow—he's an able seaman."

"Yes, sir—an able seaman," said the skipper also.

And Clancy and the skipper were something in the line of able seamen themselves.

XIII

WESLEY MARRS BRINGS A MESSAGE

GENERALLY a day in harbor is a day of loafing for the crew of a seiner; but it was not so altogether with us that day. Within two hours of the time that Wesley Marrs came in to the Breakwater in such slashing style the skipper had us into the seine-boat and on the way to the Lucy Foster. By his orders we took along ten empty mackerel barrels. "We'll go over to the beach first and fill these barrels up with sand." We all knew what the sand was for—the Johnnie Duncan was going to be put in trim to do her best sailing. Coming down the coast the skipper and Clancy decided that she was down by the stern a trifle.

So we attended to the sand, and on the way back hauled our second seine out of the hold of the Lucy Foster, and piled it into the seine-boat. With the last of the twine into the seine-boat and just as we were about to push off from the Lucy, Wesley Marrs put a foot on the rail of his vessel and spoke to Maurice.

"And when I was taking the last of that aboard

in the dock in Gloucester, you wouldn't believe who it was stepped onto the cap-log and looking down on the deck of the Lucy says, 'And you'll take good care of that seine for Captain Blake, won't you, Captain Marrs?' Could you guess now, Maurice?"

"No," said Maurice.

"No, I'll bet you can't. It isn't often she comes down the dock. Miss Foster no less. 'And what makes you think I won't?' I asks her. 'Oh, of course I know you will,' she says, 'and deliver it to him in good order, too.' 'I'll try,' I says, as though it was a desp'rate job I had on hand—to put a seine in the hold and turn it over to another vessel when I met her. 'But what makes you worry about this partic'lar seine, Miss Foster?' I asks."

"Which Miss Foster was it, Wesley—the one your vessel is named after?" broke in our skipper.

"No—no—but the younger one—Alice. 'But what makes you worry?' I asks her, and she didn't say anything, but that one that's with her all the time—the one that goes with the lad that designed the Johnnie Duncan——"

"Joe's cousin here——"

"That's it—the fat little Buckley girl—a fine girl too. And if I was a younger man and looking for a wife, there's the kind for me—but anyway she up and says, 'Alice is worried, Captain Marrs,

because she owns a third of Captain Blake's vessel —a good part of her little fortune's in the Duncan —and if anything happens to the seine one-third of it, of course, comes out of her. And it cost a good many hundred dollars. So you must be careful.' 'Oh, that's it?' says I. 'Then it'll be shortened sail and extra careful watches on the Lucy till I meet Maurice, for I mustn't lose any property of Miss Foster's.' "

We rowed away from the Lucy Foster, and I supposed that was the end of it. But that night going on deck to take a last look at the stars before turning in, there was the skipper and Clancy walking the break and talking.

"And did you know, Tommie, that Miss Foster owned any of this one?" the skipper was saying.

"No," said Tommie, "I didn't know, but——"

"But you suspected. Well, I didn't even suspect. And there's that seine we lost last night—cost all of eight hundred dollars."

"That's what it did—a fine seine."

A few minutes later the skipper went below, and Clancy, seeing me, said, "Hold on, Joey. Did you hear what the skipper said?"

"About Miss Foster owning a share of the vessel?"

"Well, not that so much, but about the loss of the seine?"

"Yes—why?"

"Why? Joe, but sometimes a man would think you were about ten year old. I tell you, Joe, I'm not too sure it's going to be Withrow. And if you don't see some driving on this one when next we get among the fish, then—" But he didn't finish it, only clucked his tongue and went below.

Clancy was right again. During the night the weather moderated, and in the morning the first of the fleet to go out past the Breakwater was the Johnnie Duncan. It looked to us as if the skipper thought the mackerel would be all gone out of the sea before we got back to the spot where we had struck them two days before.

XIV

A PROSPECT OF NIGHT-SEINING

WE might have stayed in harbor another twenty-four hours and lost nothing by it. It was dawn when we put out from the Delaware Breakwater, and by dark of the same day we were back to where we had met the big school and lost the seine two days before. And there we hung about for another night and day waiting for the sea to flatten out. Mackerel rarely show in rough weather, even if you could put out a seine-boat and go after them. But I suppose that it did us no harm to be on the ground and ready.

On the evening of the next day there was something doing. There was still some sea on, but not enough to hurt. Along about eight o'clock, I remember, I came off watch and dropped into the forec's'le to fix up my arm, which was still badly strained from hanging onto the seine-boat's painter when I was washed overboard. The skipper, taking a look, told me not to go into the dory that night, but to let Billie Hurd, who was spare hand, take my place, and for me to stay aboard. I would

rather have gone into the dory, of course, but was not able to pull an oar—that is, pull it as I'd have to pull when driving for a school—and knowing I would be no more than so much freight in the dory there was nothing else to do. "And if we see fish, Clancy'll stay to the mast-head to-night—as good a seine-master as sails out of Gloucester is Tommie—better than me," he said. "I'm going in the seine-boat, and Eddie Parsons, you'll take Clancy's place in the dory." And buttoning his oil-jacket up tight, he put on his mitts and went on deck.

That evening the forward gang were doing about as much work as seiners at leisure usually do. It was in the air that we would strike fish, but the men had not yet been told to get ready. So four of them were playing whist at the table under the lamp and two were lying half in and half out of opposite upper bunks, trying to get more of the light on the pages of the books they were reading. Long Steve, in a lower port bunk nearer the gangway, was humming something sentimental, and two were in a knot on the lockers, arguing fiercely over nothing in particular. There was a fellow in the peak roaring out, "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled." Only the cook, just done with mixing bread, seemed to have ever done a lick of work in his life, and he was now standing by the

galley fire rolling the dough off his fingers. The cook on a fisherman is always a busy man.

Down the companion-way and into the thick of this dropped Clancy, oiled up and all ready to go aloft. To the mast-head of a vessel, even on an April night in southern waters, it is cold enough, especially when, like a seiner, she is nearly always by the wind; and Clancy was wrapped up. "I think," said Clancy, as his boot-heels hit the floor, "I'll have a mug-up." From the boiler on the galley-stove he poured out a mug of coffee and from the grub-locker he took a slice of bread and two thick slices of cold beef. He buried the bread among the beef and leaned against the foremast while he ate.

Once when Clancy was a skipper he did a fine bit of rescuing out to sea, and after he got home a newspaper man saw him and wrote him up. I had the clipping stuck on the wall of Withrow's store for months and had read it so often that I knew it by heart. "In heavy jack-boots and summer sou'-wester, with a black jersey of fine quality sticking up above the neck of his oil-jacket, with a face that won you at sight; cheeks a nice even pink; damp, storm-beaten, and healthful; with mouth, eyes, and jaw bespeaking humor, sympathy, and courage; shoulders that seemed made for butting to windward—an attractive, inspiring, magnetic man al-

together—that is Captain Tommie Clancy of the Gloucester fisherman, the Mary Andrews." That was how it read, and certainly it fitted him now, as he stood there in the middle of the thick curling smoke of the pipes, holding the mug of coffee in one hand and the sandwich of bread and meat in the other, leaning easily against the butt of the foremast, and between gulps and bites taking notice of the crew.

"Give me," he said to the cook as the proper man for an audience, "a seiner's crew when they're not on fish for real gentlemen of leisure. Look at 'em now—you'd think they were all near-sighted, with their cards up to their chins. And above them look—Kipling to starb'd and the Duchess to port. Mulvaney, I'll bet, filled full of whiskey and keeping the heathen on the jump, and Airy Fairy Lillian, or some other daisy with winning ways, disturbing the peace of mind of half a dozen dukes. Mulvaney's all right, but the Duchess! They'll be taking books of that kind to the mast-head next. What d'y' s'pose I found aft the other day? Now what d'y' s'pose? I'll bet you'd never guess. No, no. Well, 'He Loved, but Was Lured Away.' Yes. Isn't that fine stuff for a fisherman to be feeding on? But whoever was reading it, he was ashamed of it. 'Well, who owns this thing?' says I, picking up the lured-away lad. 'Nobody,' speaks

up Sam there. Of course he didn't own it— O no!

"Violet Vance," went on Clancy, and took another bite of his sandwich. "Violet Vance and Wilful Winnie and a whole holdful of airy creatures couldn't help a fisherman when there's anything stirring. I waded through a whole bunch of 'em once,"—he reached over and took a wedge of pie from the grub-locker. "Yes, I went through a whole bunch of 'em once—pretty good pie this, cook, though gen'rally those artificial apples that swings on strings ain't in it with the natural tree apples for pie—once when we were laying somewhere to the east'ard of Sable Island, in a blow and a thick fog—fresh halibuting—and right in the way of the liners. And I expect I was going around like a man asleep, because the skipper comes up and begins to talk to me. It was my first trip with him and I was a young lad. 'Young fellow,' says the skipper, Matt Dawson—this was in the Lorelei—'young fellow,' says Matt, 'you look tired. Let me call up the crew and swing a hammock for you from the fore-rigging to the jumbo boom. How'll that do for you? When the jumbo slats it'll keep the hammock rocking. Let me,' he says. 'P'raps,' he goes on, 'you wouldn't mind waking up long enough to give this music box a turn or two every now and then while the

fog lasts.' We had a patent fog-horn aboard, the first I ever saw, and I'd clear forgot it—warn't used to patent horns. But just another little wedge of pie, George.

"However, I suppose when there's nothing doing there's no very great harm. But we'll try to keep some of you busy to-night. Praise the Lord, the moon's out of the way and it's looking black already and the sea ought to fire up fine later on. And there's a nice little breeze to overhaul a good school when we see one. If any of you are beginning to think of getting in a wink of sleep then you'd better turn in now, for you're sure to be out before long. I'm going aloft."

Clancy climbed up the companion-way. Then followed the scraping of his boot-heels across the deck. Half a minute later, had anybody cared to go up and have a look, I suppose he would have been discovered astraddle of the highest block above the forethroat—he and the skipper—watching out sharply for the lights of the many other vessels about them, but more particularly straining their eyes for the phosphorescent trails of mackerel.

XV

CLANCY TO THE MAST-HEAD

THE men below knew their skipper and Clancy too well to imagine that they were to be too long left in peace. And then, too, the next man off watch reported a proper night for mackerel. "Not a blessed star out—and black! It's like digging a hole in the ground and looking into it. And the skipper's getting nervous, I know. I could hear him stirrin' 'round up there when I was for'ard just now, and he hollered to the wheel that up to the no'the'ard it looked like planty of fish. 'And I callate we ain't the only vessel got eyes for it,' he said."

"Yes," said his watch-mate, who had just dropped down, "it's nothing but side-lights all 'round and——"

Just then came the skipper's voice from aloft. "Tell the boys they might's well oil up and be ready." The watch did not have to repeat it—we all heard it below, and fore and aft, in cabin and forec's'le, the gang made ready. Cards, novels, and all the hot arguments went by the board,

and then after a mug-up for nearly all we slid into oil-clothes, boots and sou'westers, and puffing at what was probably to be the last pipeful of the evening, we lay around on lockers and on the floor, backs to the butt of the mast and backs to the stove—wherever there was space for a broad back and a pair of stout legs our fellows dropped themselves, discussing all the while the things that interested them—fish, fishing, fast vessels, big shares, politics, Bob Fitzsimmons, John L. Sullivan, good stories, and just then particularly, because two of the crew were thinking of marrying, the awful price of real estate in Gloucester.

By and by, ringing as clear as if he himself stood at the companion-way, came the skipper's voice from the mast-head: "On deck everybody!" No more discussion, no more loafing—pipes were smothered into bosoms, and up the companion-way crowded oil-skins and jack-boots.

Then came: "It looks like fish ahead of us. Haul the boat alongside and drop the dory over."

We jumped. Four laid hands on the dory in the waist and ten or a dozen heaved away on the stiff painter of the seine-boat that was towing astern. Into the air and over the starboard rail went the dory, while ploughing up to the vessel's boom at the port fore-rigging came the bow of the seine-boat.

Then followed: "Put the tops'ls to her—sharp now."

The halyards could be heard whirring up toward the sky, while two bunches of us sagged and lifted on the deck below. Among us it was, "Now then—o-ho—sway away—good," until topsails were flat as boards, and the schooner, hauled up, had heeled to her scuppers.

"Slap the stays'l to her and up with the balloon. Half the fleet's driving to the no'the'ard. Lively."

The Johnnie liked that rarely. With the seventy-five foot main-boom sheeted in to her rail, with the thirty-seven-foot spike bowsprit poking a lane in the sea when she dove and a path among the clouds when she lifted, with her midship rail all but flush with the sea and the night breeze to sing to her—of course she liked it, and she showed her liking. She'd tear herself apart now before she'd let anything in the fleet go by her. And red and green lights were racing to both quarters of her.

"Into the boat!" It was the skipper's voice again, and fifteen men leaped over the rail at the word. Two dropped into the dory and thirteen jumped from the vessel's rail onto thwarts or netting or into the bottom of the seine-boat—anywhere at all so that they get in quickly. As extra hand on deck I had to stand by and pay out the painter.

In the middle of it came the skipper sliding down from the mast-head. "Drop astern, boat and dory," he called out, and himself leaped over the quarter and onto the pile of netting as into the Johnnie's boiling wake they went. The thirty-eight-foot seine-boat was checked up a dozen fathoms astern, and the dory just astern of that. The two men in the dory had to fend off desperately as they slid by the seine-boat.

On the deck of the Johnnie were the cook, who had the wheel, and myself, who had to stand by the sheets. There would be stirring times soon, for even from the deck occasional flashes of light, marking small pods of mackerel, could be made out on the surface of the sea. Clancy, now at the mast-head alone, was noting these signs, we felt sure, and with them a whole lot of other things. To the mast-heads of other vessels out in the night were other skippers, or seine-masters, and all with skill and nerve and a great will to get fish.

The Johnnie was making perhaps ten knots good now, and with every jerk the painter of the seine-boat chafed and groaned in the taffrail chock. The skipper from the boat called for more line. "Slack away a bit, slack away. We're not porpoises."

I jumped to attend to the painter just as Clancy's voice broke in from above: "Swing her off about

two points, ease your main sheet and keep an eye on that light to looard. Off, off—that's good—hold her—and Joe, slack stays'l and then foretops'l halyards. Be ready to let go balloon halyards and stand by down-haul. Look alive."

I paid out some sheet from the bitt by the wheel-box, unbuttoned the after stays'l tack, jumped forward and loosed up halyards till her kites dropped limp.

"Down with your balloon there—and at the wheel there, jibe her over. Watch out for that fellow astern—he's pretty handy to our boat. Watch out in boat and dory!" The last warning was a roar.

The big balloon gossamer came rattling down the long stay and the jaws of the booms ratched, fore and main, as they swung over. From astern came the voices of the men in boat and dory, warning each other to hang on when they felt her jibing. Some of them must have come near to being jerked overboard. "Why in God's name don't you slack that painter?" came the voice of the skipper from the boat.

I leaped to give them more painter, and "Draw away your jib—draw away your jumbo," came from aloft. Sheets were barely fast when it was: "Steady at the wheel, George — steady her — ste-a-dy— Great God! man, if you can't see can't

you feel that fellow just ahead? And, skipper, tell them to close their jaws astern there—water won't hurt 'em. Ready all now?"

"Ready!" roared back the skipper.

"All right. Down with your wheel a bit now, George. Down—more yet. Hold her there."

The vessels that we had dodged by this bit of luffing were now dropping by us; one red light was slowly sliding past our quarter to port, and one green shooting by our bow to starboard. Evidently Clancy had only been waiting to steer clear of these two neighbors, for there was plenty of fish in sight now. The sea was flashing with trails of them. Clancy now began to bite out commands.

"Stand ready everybody. In the boat and dory there—is everything ready, skipper?"

"All ready, boat and dory."

Out came Clancy's orders then—rapid fire—and as he ripped them out, no whistling wind could smother his voice, no swash of the sea could drown it. In boat, dory and on deck, every brain glowed to understand and every heart pumped to obey.

"Up with your wheel, George, and let her swing by. Stea-dy. Ready in the boat. Steady your wheel. Are you ready in the boat? Let her swing off a little more, George. Steady—hold her there. Stand by in the boat. Now then—now! Cast off

your painter, cast off and pull to the west'ard. And drive her! Up with the wheel. More yet—that's good. Drive her, I say, skipper. Where's that dory?—I don't see the dory. The dory, the dory—where in hell's the dory?—show that lantern in the dory. All right, the dory. Hold her up, George. Don't let her swing off another inch now. Drive her, boys, drive her! Look out now! Stand by the seine! Stand by—the twine—do you hear, Steve! The twine! Drive her—drive her—blessed Lord! drive her. That's the stuff, skipper, drive her! Let her come up, George. Down with your wheel—down with you wheel—ste-a-dy. Drive her, skipper, drive her! Turn in now—in—shorter yet. Drive her now—where's that dory!—hold her up!—not you, George! you're all right—ste-a-dy. Hold that dory up to the wind!—that's it, boys—you're all right—straight ahead now! That's the stuff. Turn her in now again, skipper. In the dory there—show your lantern in the dory and be ready for the seine-boat. Good enough. Now cover your lantern in the dory and haul away when you're ready."

To have experienced the strain and drive of that rush, to have held an oar in the boat during that and to have shared with the men in the confidence they gathered—ours was a skipper to steer a boat around a school—and the soul that rang in Clan-

cy's voice!—why, just to stand on deck, as I did, and listen to it—it was like living.

During this dash we could make out neither boat nor dory from deck, but the flashes of light raised by the oars at every stroke were plainly to be seen in that phosphorescent sea. Certainly they were making that boat hop along! Ten good men, with every man a long, broad blade, and double banked, so that every man might encourage his mate and be himself spurred on by desperate effort. Legs, arms, shoulders, back, all went into it and their wake alive with smoke and fire to tell them they were moving! To be in that?— The middle of a black night on the Atlantic was this, and the big seine-heaver was throwing the seine in great armfuls. And Hurd and Parsons in the little dory tossing behind and gamely trying to keep up! They were glad enough to be in the dory, I know, to get hold of the buoy, and you can be sure there was some lively action aboard of her when Clancy called so fiercely to them to hold the buoy up to the wind, so that the efforts of the crew of the seine-boat, racing to get their two hundred odd fathoms of twine fence around the flying school, might not go for naught.

XVI

WE GET A FINE SCHOOL

WITH his "Haul away now when you're ready," Clancy came down from aloft. He was sliding down evidently by way of the jib halyards, for there was the sound of a chafing whiz that could be nothing else than the friction of oilskins against taut manila rope, a sudden check, as of a block met on the way, an impatient, soft, little forgivable oath, and then a plump! that meant that he must have dropped the last twelve or fifteen feet to the deck. Immediately came the scurry of his boot-heels as he hurried aft. In another moment he stood in the glow of the binnacle light, and reaching back toward the shadow of the cook, but never turning his head from that spot out in the dark where he had last seen the boat, he took the wheel.

"All right, George, I've got you. A good-sized school, by the looks, if they got them, and I think they have. Did you see that boat ahead we near ran into?—the last time we put the wheel down? Man, but for a second I thought they were gone.

I hope no blessed vessel comes as near to our fellows. And they were so busy rowing and heaving twine they never saw us, and myself nearly cross-eyed trying to watch them and our own boat and the fish all the time. Go below, George, she's all right now, and tell Joe—where is he?—to go below, too, and have a mug-up for himself. He must be soaked through taking the swash that must've come over her bow for the last hour. But tell him to come right up so's to keep watch out ahead."

I didn't go below, however, but standing by the fore-rigging kept an eye out ahead. Clancy himself stood to the wheel with his head ever turned over one shoulder, until he saw the flare of a torch from the seine-boat. "Good!" he exclaimed. "What there is is safe now, anyway."

After that his work was easy. He had only to dodge the lights of other vessels now, the old red and green lights that had been our neighbors all that evening, and a few new yellow flares that came from other seine-boats. So his eyes ranged the blackness and in rings about his own seine-boat he sailed the Johnnie Duncan. That the crew were quite a little while pursing up only gave him satisfaction. "A nice school, Joe, if they got it all," he said, "a nice school of 'em." And after a pause, "I think I'll stand down and have a look."

He ran down, luffed, and hailed, "Hi—skipper, what's it like?"

From the row of figures that were seen to be crowding gunnel and thwarts and hauling on the seine, one shadow straightened up beside the smoky torch and spoke. "Can't be sure yet, Tommie, but things look all right so far. A fair-sized school if we don't lose 'em."

"Lord, don't lose 'em, skipper, though I think you've got 'em fast enough now. Sounds natural to hear 'em flipping inside the corks, don't it? Ought to be hurrying 'em up, skipper—it's getting along in the night."

Clancy, very well satisfied, stood away again and continued to sail triangles around boat and dory. Being now clear of the greater part of the mental strain his spirits began to lighten. Merely by way of being sociable with himself he hummed some old ditties. There was that about the old coaster, the Eliza Jane. I liked to hear him sing that, as, dancing a one-footed jig-step by the wheel-box, he bumped it out:

" Oh, the 'Liza Jane with a blue foremast
And a load of hay came drifting past.
Her skipper stood aft and he said, ' How do ?
We're the 'Liza Jane and who be you ? '

He stood by the wheel and he says, ' How do ?
We're from Bangor, Maine—from where be you? '

" The 'Liza Jane got a new main truck—
A darn fine thing but wouldn't stay stuck.
Came a breeze one day from the no'-no'-west
And the gosh-darned thing came down with the rest.

Oh, hi-diddle-di—a breeze from the west—
Who'd 'a' thunk the truck wouldn't stuck with the rest?

" Oh, the 'Liza Jane left the wharf one day,
A fine flood tide and the day Friday,
But the darned old tide sent her bow askew
And the 'Liza Jane began for to slew.

Oh, hi-diddle-di—she'd 'a' fairly flew,
If she only could sail the other end to.

" Oh, the 'Liza Jane left port one day,
With her hold full of squash and her deck all hay.
Two years back with her sails all set
She put from Bath—she's sailing yet.

Oh, hi-diddle-di for a good old craft
She'd 've sailed very well with her bow on aft."

There was a long story to the Eliza Jane, but Clancy did not finish it. Maybe he felt that it was not in harmony with that lowering sky or that flashing sea. Maybe, too, in the waters that rolled and the wake that smoked was the inspiration for something more stirring. At any rate he began, in a voice that carried far, an old ballad of the war of 1812.

Two or three more stanzas to warm up, and the fight was on. And you would think Clancy

was in it. He laid every mast and yard of the enemy over the side of her, he made her decks run with blood, and at the last, in a noble effort, he caused her to strike her flag.

By the time he had finished that, it happened that we were running before the wind, and, going so, it was very quiet aboard the vessel. There was none of the close-hauled wash through her scuppers, nor was there much play of wind through stays and halyards. It was in fact unusually quiet, and it needed only that to set Clancy off on a more melancholy tack. So in a subdued voice he began the recitation of one of the incidents that have helped to make orphans of Gloucester children:

"Twelve good vessels fighting through the night,
Fighting, fighting, that no'the-east gale;
Every man, be sure, did his might,
But never a sign of a single sail
Was there in the morning when the sun shone red,
But a hundred and seventy fine men—dead—
Were settling somewhere into the sand
On Georges shoals, which is Drowned Men's Land.

"Seventy widows kneeling——"

A long hail came over the water and a torch was raised and lowered. "Hi-i—" hallooed the voice.

"Hi-i-i—" hallooed back Clancy as he pulled down his wheel. You might have thought he intended to run over them. But no, for at the very

last second he threw her up cleverly and let her settle beside the boat, from which most of the men came tumbling immediately over the side of the vessel. Of those who stayed, one shackled the boat's bow onto the iron that hung from the boom at the fore-rigging, and having done that, braced an oar between himself and the vessel's run to hold the boat away and steady while another in the stern of the boat did the same thing with his oar. In the boat's waist two men hung onto the seine.

A section of the cork edge of the seine was then gathered inboard and clamped down over the vessel's rail, with the mackerel crowded into the middle part, and the bunt of the seine thus held safely between boat and vessel. Into this space the sea swashed and slapped after a manner that kept all in the boat completely drenched and made it pretty hard for the men in bow and stern to fend off and retain their balance at the same time.

And then began the bailing in. Guided by the skipper, who stood on the break, our big dip-net, which could hold a barrel easily, was dropped over the rail and in among the kicking fish. A twist and a turn and "He-yew!" the skipper yelled. "Oy-hoo!" grunted the two gangs of us at the halyards, and into the air and over the rail swung the dip-net, swimming full. "Down!" We let it sag quickly to Clancy and Parsons, who were at the

rail. "Hi-o!" they called cheerfully, and turned the dip-net inside out. Out and down it went again, "He-yew!" and up and in it came again. "Oy-hoo!" "Hi-o!" and flop! it was turned upside down and another barrel of fat, lusty fish flipped their length against the hard deck. Head and tail they flipped, each head and tail ten times a second seemingly, until it sounded—they beat the deck so frantically—as if a regiment of gentle little drummer boys were tapping a low but wonderfully quick-sounding roll. Scales flew. We found some next morning glued to the mast-head. I never can get some people to believe that it is so—mackerel scales to the mast-head.

"He-yew!" called the skipper, "Oy-hoo!" hollered the halyards gang, "Hi-o!" sung out Clancy and Parsons cheerily at the rail. "Fine fat fish," commented the men in the seine-boat, the only men who had time to draw an extra breath.

Blazing torches were all around us. Arms worked up and down, big boots stamped, while inboard and out swung the dip-net, and onto the deck flopped the mackerel. "Drive her!" called the skipper, and "He-yew!" "Oy-hoo!" and "Hi-o!" it went. Drenched oilskins steamed, wet faces glowed, glad eyes shone through the smoke flare, and the pitching vessel, left to herself, plunged up and down to the lift and fall of every sea.

XVII

A DRIVE FOR MARKET

HER deck was pretty well filled with mackerel when "All dry," said Long Steve, and drew the last of the seine into the boat.

"Then hurry aboard and drop that seine-boat astern. And—whose watch? Take the wheel —wait till I give you the course—there. But don't drive her awhile yet. Some of those fish might be washed over. But it won't be for long."

"Ready with the ice?" he asked next.

"All ready," and the men who had been chopping ice and making ready the pens in the hold stood by to take the mackerel as we passed them down.

As soon as we had enough of them off the vessel's deck to make it safe to drive her, the skipper gave her a little more sheet and let her go for New York. We hustled the seine-boat aboard too. Some other vessels must have got fish, too, and there was no time to waste.

It was a good-sized school and when we had them all iced and below—more than thirty thousand count—it was time for all hands to turn in—

all but the two men on watch of course. I didn't turn in myself, but after a mug-up and pipeful below came on deck again. It was a pretty good sort of a night for a dark night, with a moderate breeze that sang in your ears when you leaned against the halyards and a sea that lapped bucketfuls of spray over her rail forward and that tumbled away in a wide flat hump as our quarter slipped on and left it behind.

I found the skipper leaning against the weather rigging and watching a red light coming up on us. Noticing me he said, "There's that porgy steamer that we beat out for that school the other day overhauling us now. There's the beauty of steam. The crew of this one knows more in a minute than they know in a week about fishing in that steamer, and we'd be carrying our summer kites when that gang, if they were in a sailing vessel, would be laying to an anchor; and with our boat out and their boat out and a school in sight they'd have to take our leavings. But here's one of the times when they have the best of it."

There wasn't much wind stirring then, but it promised to breeze up, or so the skipper thought, and I'm sure I was glad to hear him say it, for the harder it blew the sooner we would get to New York and the better our chance to beat the porgy-man. First in to market got the cream.

It was pretty well on to daybreak when the porgy steamer got up abreast of us and after a while worked by. One of them took the trouble to sing out to us when they went by, "Well, you got a school before us, but we'll be tied up and into the dock and spending our money ashore whilst you're still along the Jersey coast somewhere."

And we supposed they would, but Hurd, who was then to our wheel, had to call back to them, "Oh, I dunno. I dunno about that—it's a good run to Fulton Market dock yet." And, turning to us, "I hope the bloody old boiler explodes so nobody'll be able to find a mackerel of 'em this side the Bay of Fundy. Of course I wouldn't want to see the men come to any harm, but wouldn't it jar you—them scrubs?"

The skipper wasn't saying anything. And it meant a lot to him, too. He was looking after the steamer and, I know, praying for wind. We could see it in his eyes.

And sometimes things come as we like to have them. At full dawn it was a nice breeze with the Johnnie Duncan washing her face in plenty of good spray and the fine sun shining warm on a fresh sea-way. Another hour, the wind hauling and still making, the Johnnie was down to her rail, and awhile after that she was getting all the wind she needed.

"We may have a chance to try her out on this run, who knows?" said the skipper. We were coming up on the porgy steamer then and you should have seen his eyes when they looked from the rail to the deck of his vessel and from the deck again to aloft. On the steamer the gang were in the waist watching us coming and they must have been piling the coal into her below and giving her the jet steadily, for out of her funnel was coming the smoke in clouds mixed with steam.

"But their firemen can stoke till they're black in the face and they won't get more than eleven or eleven and a half knots out of her," said Clancy. "I know her—the Nautilus—and if this one under us ain't logging her fourteen good then I don't know. And she'll be doing better yet before we see New York."

They were driving the porgyman then, but she was fated. Once we began to get her she came back to us fast enough, and once she was astern she troubled us no more. After the porgyman we passed a big white yacht, evidently just up from the West Indies after a winter's cruise. She looked a model for a good sailer, but there was no chance to try her out, for they had her under shortened sail when we went by.

There was a New York blue-fisherman on our weather bow bound for New York, too, and the

way we went by her was a scandal. And farther on we drove by a big bark—big enough, almost, to take us aboard. They were plainly trying to make a passage on her, but we left her too. Then we passed another yacht, but she wasn't carrying half our sail. Her hull was as long as ours, but she didn't begin to be sparred as we were. We must have had ten feet on her main-boom and ten feet more bowsprit outboard, and yet under her four lower sails she seemed to be making heavy going of it. It's a good yacht that can hold a fisherman in a breeze and a sea-way. We beat this one about as bad as we beat the blue-fisherman. As we went by we tried to look as though we had beaten so many vessels that we'd lost all interest in racing, and at the same time we were all dancing on our toes to think what a vessel we had under us. It was that passage we held the north-bound Savannah steamer for seven hours. Her passengers stood by the rail and watched us, and when at last we crowded our bowsprit past her nose, they waved their handkerchiefs and cheered us like mad.

"When we get this one loosened up a bit and down to her trim, she'll sail some or I don't know," said our skipper. He stood in the cabin gangway then and filled his boots with water, but he wouldn't take in sail. Back behind us was another seiner.

We could just make out that they were soaking it to her too. The skipper nodded his head back at her. Then, with one hand on the house and the other on the rail, he looked out from under our main-boom and across at the steamer. "Not a rag —let the spars come out of her."

One thing was sure—the Johnnie was a vessel that could stand driving. She didn't crowd herself as she got going. No, sir! The harder we drove her the faster she went. Laying down on her side made no difference to her. In fact we were not sure that she wouldn't do her best sailing on her side. But it hadn't come to that yet. She was standing up under sail fine. Most of them, we knew, would have washed everything off their deck before that. And certainly there would have been no standing down by the lee rail on too many of them with that breeze abeam.

Going up New York harbor, where we had to tack, the Savannah steamer could have gone by if she had to, but big steamers slow down some going into a harbor, and we holding on to everything made up for the extra distance sailed. The wind, of course, was nothing to what it was outside, and that made some difference. Anyway, we kept the Johnnie going and held the steamer up to the Battery, where, as she had to go up North River, she gave us three toots. The people on the Battery

must have had a good look at us. I guess it was not every day they saw a schooner of the Johnnie's size carrying on like that. Billie Hurd had to pay his respects to them. "Look, you loafers, look, and see a real vessel sailing in."

There was a sassy little East River towboat that wanted to give us a tow, but our skipper said it would be losing time to take sail off and wait for a line then. The tug captain said, "Oh, no; and you can't dock her anyway in this harbor without a tug."

"Oh, I can dock her all right, I guess," said our skipper.

"Maybe you think you can, but wait till you try it, and have a nice little bill for damages besides."

"Well, the vessel's good for the damages, too."

That towboat tailed us just the same, but we had the satisfaction of fooling him. The skipper kept the Johnnie going till the right time and then, when the tugboat people thought it was too late, he shot her about on her heel and into the dock with her mainsail coming down on the run and jibs dead.

A couple of East Side loafers standing on the wharf cap-log were nearly swept away by the end of our bowsprit, we came on so fast. Four or five of us leaped ashore, and with lines out and made fast in no time, we had her docked without so much

as cracking a single shingle of the house across the head of the dock.

We sold our mackerel for nineteen cents apiece. Fifty-seven hundred and odd dollars was our stock, and about a hundred and forty dollars each man's share. We felt a little bit chesty after that. We were not the first to market that year, but we were the first since the early flurry, and the biggest stock so far that spring was to our credit.

We stood on the deck and watched the porgy steamer come in and tie up, too late for that day's market. Some of our fellows had to ask them where they got their fish—to the s'uth'ard or where?—and two or three fights came out of it, but no harm done. Then nearly everybody drew some money off the skipper, and we smoked fifteen-cent cigars and threw our chests out. We all went uptown, too, and took in the theatres that night, and afterwards treated each other and pretty nearly everybody else that we met along the East Side on the way back, until the policemen began to notice us and ask if we didn't think we'd better be getting back to our ships. One or two of the crew had to get into fights with the toughs along the water front, but we were all safely aboard by three o'clock in the morning.

All but Clancy. Some of us were trying to get some sleep along towards morning when Clancy

came aboard with a fine shore list. The cook, who was up and stirring about for breakfast, noticed him first. "It's a fine list you've got, Tommie."

"And why not?—and a fine beam wind coming down the street. I'm like a lot of other deep-draught craft of good model, George—I sail best with the wind abeam. A bit of a list gets you down to your lines." And until we turned out for breakfast, after which it was time to be off and away to the fleet again, he kept us all in a roar with the story of his adventures.

XVIII

A BRUSH WITH THE YACHTING FLEET

THROUGH all of that month and through most of the month of May we chased the mackerel up the coast. By the middle of May we were well up front with the killers, and our skipper's reputation was gaining. The vessel, too, was getting quite a name as a sailer. Along the Maryland, Delaware, and Jersey coasts we chased them—on up to off Sandy Hook and then along the Long Island shore, running them fresh into New York. There were nights and days that spring when we saw some driving on the Johnnie Duncan.

Toward the end of May, with the fish schooling easterly to off No Man's Land and reported as being seen on Georges and in the Bay of Fundy—working to the eastward all the time—we thought the skipper would put for home, take in salt, fill the hold with barrels and refit for a Cape Shore trip—that is, head the fish off along the Nova Scotia shore, from Cape Sable and on to anywhere around the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and stay there until we had filled her up with salt mackerel. We

thought so, because most of the fleet had decided on that plan and because we had been away from home since the first of April. But no—he stayed cruising off Block Island and running them fresh into Newport with the last half-dozen of the fleet.

Our idea of it was that the skipper wanted to go home badly enough, but he was set on getting a big stock and didn't care what it cost himself or us to get it. Some of us would have given a lot to be home.

> "Oh, fine blue sky and a fine blue sea
> And a blue-eyed girl awaiting me,"

was how Clancy put it as he came down from aloft one afternoon and took the wheel from me. "By the wind is it, Joe?"

"By the wind," I said—the usual word when seiners are cruising for mackerel, and I went aloft to take his place at the mast-head. It was a lazy watch, as the mackerel generally were not showing at this time in the middle of the day. They seemed to prefer the early morning or the late afternoon, or above all a dark night.

Long Steve, who came up this day to pass the time with me aloft, had been telling me about his old home, when we both noticed the topsails of what we knew must be the first of a fleet of big schooner yachts racing to Newport—from New

York, no doubt, on one of their ocean races. Steve, of course, had to try to name the leader, while she was yet miles away—seiners have wonderful eyes for vessels—and was still at it, naming the others behind, when the next on watch relieved me and I went below.

The first of the yachts was almost on us when I came down, and Clancy was watching her like a hawk when he turned the wheel over to the next man. She was as about as big as we were. We knew her well. She had been a cup defender and afterwards changed to a schooner rig. Our skipper was taking a nap below at this time, or we supposed he was. He had been up nearly a week, with no more than a two-hours' sleep each day, and so was pretty well tired. That was what made Clancy stand by the wheel and ask if the skipper was still asleep.

"No," said the skipper himself. He had just turned out, and in his stocking feet he came to the companionway and looked up. "What is it?"

"Here's this big yacht crawling by on our quarter—she'll be by us soon. I thought you wouldn't like it."

"I'll be right up. Tell the gang to sway up."

He drew on his slip-shods and came on deck. He took a look over at the yacht while we were swaying up. When we had everything good and

flat and trimmed sheets a bit, the skipper called out to take in the fore-topsail. "She hasn't got hers set," he explained.

Now, a fore-topsail does not help much—hauled up, as were the Johnnie Duncan and the yacht, it would be a hindrance to most vessels, and, perhaps, because it did not help her was why the yacht had not hers set. But it showed the skipper's fairness. Ours had been left set, because we might need it in a hurry, and also because with the skipper below nobody could order it down. Now we clewed it up.

Clancy, standing aft, threw a look at our seine-boat, which of course we had in tow. "She's quite a drag," he suggested, "for a vessel that's racing."

"Yes," said the skipper, "but wait a while. We won't cast it off unless we have to."

We did not have to. We soon had her in trim. For weeks the skipper and Clancy had been marking the Johnnie's sheets so that in an emergency they could whip her into her best sailing in no time. With that, and with the shifting of some barrels of salt that we had on deck, we soon had her going. It is surprising what a lot of difference the shifting of a few barrels of salt will make in the trim of a vessel. We had not had a try with anything for two weeks or so and had become careless. The last thing we did was to take some barrels of fresh

water that happened to be standing forward of the windlass and shift them aft, and then the Johnnie began to go along for fair.

Coming up to Block Island Light things were pretty even. Then it came a question of who was to go to windward. The yacht hauled her main-sheet in to two blocks. So did we, and, further, ran a line from the cringle in her foresail to the weather rigging. She could not make it—we had her.

"Mind the time," said the skipper, when at last we had her under our quarter—"mind the time, Tommie, when we used to do so much racing down on the Cape shore? There's where we had plenty of time for racing and all sorts of foolishness. I was pretty young then, but I mind it well. A string of men on the rigging from the shear poles clear up to the mast-head—yes, and a man astraddle the main gaff once or twice, passing buckets of water to wet down the mains'l."

"Yes, and barrels of water out toward the end of the main-boom keep the sail stretched. Man, but those were the days we paid attention to racing."

"Those were the days," asserted the skipper. "But we can do a little of it now, too."

By that you will understand we were walking away from our yacht. We were to anchor in the

harbor while she was still coming, and we had towed our seine-boat all the way.

"Lord," said Clancy, as we were tying up our foresail, "but I'd like to see this one in an ocean race with plenty of wind stirring—not a flat breeze and a short drag like we had to-day."

XIX

MINNIE ARKELL AGAIN

COMING on to dark that night a gig put off from the schooner-yacht and rowed over to us. On the way she was hailed and passed a few words with a steam-yacht anchored in between. The man in the stern of the gig was not satisfied until he had been rowed three times around the Johnnie. When he had looked his fill he came alongside.

He mistook Clancy for the skipper. I suppose he couldn't imagine a man of Clancy's figure and bearing to be an ordinary hand on a fisherman. So to Clancy he said, "Captain, you've got a wonderful vessel here. Put a single stick in her and she'll beat the world."

"Yes," said Clancy, "and she'd be a hell of a fine fisherman then, wouldn't she?"

The rest of us had to roar at that. We at once pictured the Johnnie rigged up as a sloop out on the Grand Banks, trawling or hand-lining, with the crew trying to handle her in some of the winter gales that struck in there. And a great chance

she would have rigged as a sloop and her one big sail, making a winter passage home eight or nine or ten hundred miles, when as it was, with the sail split up to schooner rig, men found it bad enough.

The master of the yacht had a message for our captain, he said, and Clancy told him the skipper was below. There they talked for a while and after the yachtsman had gone Maurice, inviting four or five of us along, dressed up, called for the seine-boat, got in and was rowed over to a steam-yacht that we now remembered had hailed the schooner-yacht's gig. All brass and varnish and white paint and gold she would be in the daytime, but now she was all lit up with electric lights below and Japanese lanterns on deck.

When we came alongside, who should come to the gangway of the yacht and welcome Maurice but Minnie Arkell—Mrs. Miner. She greeted all of us for that matter—she never pretended not to see people—and invited us all below for refreshments. There was a good lay-out there and we pitched into it. Seiners are great people at table or in a bunk. They can turn to and eat, or turn in and sleep any minute, day or night. So now we turned to. Clancy did great things to the wine. Generally he took whiskey, but he did not object to good wine now and then. He and one fellow

in a blue coat, white duck trousers, and a blue cap that never left his head, had a great chat.

"I callate that if he didn't have that cap with the button on front nobody'd know he was a real yachtsman, would they?" Eddie Parsons whispered in my ear.

The owner of the steam-yacht was trying to convince Tommie that yachting would be more in his line than fishing, but Tommie couldn't see it.

"But why not?" he asked at last. "Why not, Mr. Clancy? Is it a matter of money? If it is, I'll make that right. I pay ordinary hands twenty-five and thirty dollars a month and found, but I'll pay you fifty—sixty—seventy dollars a month to go with me. I'm going to race this steamer this summer and I want a quartermaster—a man like you that can steer to a hair-line. Seventy dollars a month now—what do you say?"

"Come now, my good man, what do you say?" Clancy got that off without so much as a smile. "But you couldn't make it seventy-five now, could you? No, I didn't mean that quite, though I've been out the dock in Gloucester of a Saturday noon and back again to the dock of a Tuesday noon—three days—and shared two hundred dollars—not as skipper, mind you, but just as hand. There now, I hope you're not going to get angry. Hadn't we better have another little touch? But I can see

myself in a suit of white duck, touching my cap, and saying, 'Aye, aye, sir,' to some slob—no reference to you, mind you—but some slob in a uniform that's got a yacht, not because he loves the sea, but because he wants to butt in somewhere—who lives aboard his yacht just the same as he does in his house ashore—electric bells, baths, servants, barber and all—and hugs the shore so close that he gets the morning paper as regularly as when he's at home. When that kind go yachting all they miss are the tables on the lawn and the automobiles going by the door. They even have canary-birds—some of them—in cages. Yes, and wouldn't be caught twenty miles off shore—no, not even in a summer's breeze for— And where would he be in a winter's gale? I can see myself rowing a gig with somebody like that in the stern giving orders and fooling—well, some simple-minded women folks, maybe, who know as much of the sea as they do of the next world—most of them—fooling them into believing that he's a devil—yes, a clean devil on the water. Seventy a month for that?—couldn't you make it seventy-five?"

"You don't mean to say that——"

"Yes," said Clancy, "I do. I'd rather stick to fishing than—but here's a shoot and let's call the quartermaster's job off."

Minnie Arkell chimed in here. "A real fisher-

man, you must remember, Mr. Keith, doesn't care much for yachting because—leaving out the question of wages, for he does make more at fishing—he can remain a fisherman and yet be independent."

"You mean they don't have to take orders as if they were on a yacht, Mrs. Miner?"

"No, no—don't make any mistake there. The discipline of a yacht, so far as I know it, is baby play to what they have on a good fisherman. The discipline aboard a warship is nothing to that aboard a fisherman, like Captain Blake's vessel say, when there is anything to be done. Fishermen, it's true, don't have to touch their caps and say, 'Very good, sir,' to a man who may be no more of a real man than themselves. On your yacht I suppose you'd discharge a man who didn't do what he was told, and on a warship he would be sent to the brig, I suppose. On a fisherman he'd be put ashore. On a fisherman they not only obey orders, but they carry them out on the jump. And why? Because they've always done it. Why, deep-sea fishermen are always getting into places where only the best of seamanship can save them, and they very early get in the way of doing things up quick and right. When a Gloucester skipper orders in the sail, say in a gale of wind, and more than apt to be in the middle of the night—you don't see

men trying to see how long it will take them to get into oilskins—or filling another pipe before they climb on deck. No, sir—the first man out on the bowsprit, if it's the jib to come in—or out on the foot-ropes, if it's the mainsail to be tied up—he's the man that will have a right to hold his head high next day aboard that vessel. And so the crew of a fisherman jump to their work—if they didn't there'd be a lot more of them lost than there are."

"Dear me," said Mr. Keith, "that never occurred to me before. But how is it, Mrs. Miner, that you have it down so fine?"

"My father was a Gloucester skipper, and since I was that high"—she put her hand on a level with her knee—"I've been listening to fishermen. And yachting life does tend to spoil a fisherman," she went on to explain. "After a summer of yachting a fisherman will begin to think that a winter of fishing is going to be a serious thing." She was warmed up then and went on talking at a great rate. And listening to her I could understand better why men took to her. She had warm blood in her. If it were not for her weakness to be admired by men, she would have been a great woman. "And they get so, that what seems extraordinary work to you is only an every-day matter to them. Do you remember that last schooner-yacht race

across the Atlantic?—when two or three reporters went along, and after they got back wrote all kinds of stories of what a desperate trip it was—how rough it was and dangerous! Well, that time there were three or four Gloucestermen making the run to Iceland. Now, they were not as big as the racing yachts and they were loaded down with all the stores for a long salt trip—their holds full of salt, for one thing—and yet they made about as good time to Iceland as that yachtsman made to Queenstown. And they weren't driving their vessels either—they don't drive on the way out. It's only coming home that they try to make passages. Now, they must have got the same weather and yet nobody ever heard them in their letters home report a word of bad weather, or ever afterward, either. And yet—but were you to Iceland that time, Maurice?"

"No," said the skipper, "but you were, Tommie?"

"Yes," answered Clancy, "in the Lucy Foster. We made Rik-ie-vik inside of fourteen days, carrying both tops'ls all the way. Wesley—Wesley Marrs—wasn't hurrying her, of course. As Mrs. Miner says, the vessels going to the east'ard don't hurry, except now and then when two of them with records get together. And the Lucy was logy, of course, with the three hundred and odd hogs-

heads of salt and other stuff in her. If we'd been driving her going to Iceland that time we'd have had the stays'l and balloon to her—and she'd have gone right along with them, too."

Mrs. Miner looked around at her yachting friends to see if they were getting all that.

"There was one day that passage it blew a bit," exclaimed Clancy. "And that was the day we thought we saw a fellow to the east'ard. We had men by the halyards all that day with splitting knives."

"Why?" asked Keith.

"Why, to cut before she could capsize."

"Oh!" said Keith and said it with a little click.

"But that's nothing. I've seen the gang with Tom O'Donnell standing watch by the halyards for days with axes when he was making a passage."

Minnie Arkell filled another glass of champagne for Clancy, and Clancy didn't give the fizz too much time to melt away either.

"These men are the real things," she said, but Clancy, for fear we were getting too much credit, broke in, "Not us seiners. It's the winter fishermen—trawlers and hand-liners—that are the real things. Of course, we lose men now and then seining, but it's in winter up on the shoal water

on the Banks that—there's where you have some seas to buck against," and he went on to tell of a battle with a gale on a winter's night on the Grand Banks. Clancy could tell a story as well as anybody I ever met. He could make the blood jump to your heart, or the tears to your eyes—or he could chill you till the blood froze. When he got through you could hear them all breathing—men and women both, like people who had just run a race. "Two hundred and odd men sailing out of Gloucester," he said, "went down that night. There weren't too many came safe out of that blow. The father of this boy here was lost—the Mary Buckley warn't it, Joe?—named for your mother?"

"And my father, too, was lost soon after," said Minnie Arkell, and the glance she gave me melted a lot of prejudice I had felt for her. That was the good human side to her.

"No better man ever sailed out of Gloucester, Mrs. Miner," said Clancy.

She flushed up. "Thank you, Tommie, for that, though I know he was a reckless man." And, she might have added, he left some of his recklessness in the blood of the Arkells.

The skipper told them a lot about sea life that night. Some of the stories he told, though long known in Gloucester, they took to be yarns at first.

They could not believe that men went through such things and lived. And then the skipper had such an easy way of telling them. After a man has been through a lot of unusual things—had them years behind him and almost forgotten them—I suppose they don't surprise him any more.

The skipper looked well that night. When he warmed up and his eyes took on a fresh shine and his mouth softened like a woman's, I tell you he was a winner. I could not help comparing him with the steam-yacht owner, who was a good-looking man, too, but in a different way. Both of them, to look at, were of the same size. Both had their clothes made by tailors who knew their business and took pains with the fitting, though it was easy to fit men like Clancy and the skipper, such fine level shoulders and flat broad backs they had. Now the skipper, as I say, when he warmed up began to look something like what he ought—like he did when walking the quarter and the vessel going out to sea. Only then it would be in a blue flannel shirt open at the throat and in jack-boots. But now, in the cabin of that yacht, dressed as he was in black clothes like anybody else and in good-fitting shoes, you had to take a second look at him to get his measure. The yachtsman thought that he and the skipper were of about the same size, and barring that the skipper's shoulders were a shade

wider there wasn't so much difference to look at. But there was a difference, just the same. The yachtsman weighed a hundred and seventy-five pounds. He asked what Maurice weighed. "Oh, about the same," said Maurice. But I and Clancy knew that he weighed a hundred and ninety-five, and Minnie Arkell, who knew too, finally had to tell it, and then they all took another look at the two men and could see where the difference lay. There was no padding to Maurice, and when you put your hand where his shoulders and back muscles ought to be you found something there.

When we were leaving that night, Mrs. Miner stopped Maurice on the gangway to say, "And when they have the fishermen's race this fall, you must sail the Johnnie Duncan, Maurice, as you've never sailed a vessel yet. With you on the quarter and Clancy to the wheel she ought to do great things."

"Oh, we'll race her as well as we know how if we're around, but Tom O'Donnell and Wesley Marrs and Tommie Ohlsen and Sam Hollis and the rest—they'll have something to say about it, I'm afraid."

"What of it? You've got the vessel and you must win—I'll bet all the loose money I have in the world on her. Remember I own a third of

her. Mr. Duncan sold me a third just before I left Gloucester."

That was a surprise to us—that Mrs. Miner owned a part of the Johnnie Duncan. It set Clancy to figuring, and turning in that night, he said—he was full of fizzy wine, but clear-headed enough—"Well, what do you make of that? The Foster girl a third and Minnie Arkell a third of this one. I'm just wise to it that it wasn't old Duncan alone that wanted Maurice for skipper. Lord, Lord, down at the Delaware Breakwater do you remember that when we heard that the Foster girl owned a part of this one, I said, like the wise guy I thought I was, 'Ha, ha,' I said, 'so Miss Foster owns a third? That's it, eh?' And now it's Minnie Arkell a third. Where does Withrow come in? And did you hear her when she invited Maurice to the time they're going to have on that same steam-yacht to-morrow night?—that was when she whispered to him at the gangway, when we were leaving. She tried to get him to promise to come, and at last he said he would if he was in the harbor. 'Then be sure to be in the harbor—you're skipper and can do as you please. Do come,' she said at the last, good and loud, 'and tell them how to sail a vessel in heavy weather. They only play at it, so do come and tell them.' And then in a low voice—'But I want you to come for yourself.'

That's what she says—'For yourself,' she says—in a whisper almost. 'Take a run into the harbor tomorrow night if you can, Maurice,' she says. O Lord, women—women—they don't know a thing —no," and Clancy turned in.

XX

THE SKIPPER PUTS FOR HOME

WE were out of Newport Harbor before daybreak of next morning, and cruised inside Block Island all that day. We all thought the skipper would be in to Newport that night—it was no more than a two hours' run the way the wind was—and we waited.

The test came after supper. We had supper as usual, at three o'clock. Breakfast at four, dinner at ten, supper at three—mug-ups before and after and in between. Along about four o'clock the skipper, standing on the break, stood looking back toward where Newport lay. Had we turned then we'd have been in nicely by dark. It was a fine afternoon—the finest kind of an afternoon—a clear blue sky, and a smooth blue sea with the surface just rippling beautifully. All fire was the sun and the sails of every vessel in sight looked white as could be. Several yachts passed us—steam and sail—all bright and handsome and all bound into Newport, and the skipper's eyes rested long on them—on one of them particularly with music aboard.

The Skipper Puts For Home

The skipper looked back a long time—looked back, and looked back. He began walking the quarter—back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. The sun got lower and lower, the sea lost some of its blue, and the air grew fresher, and still he kept looking back.

"It'll be a grand sunset to-night, Tommie."

"The finest kind. But one thing wrong with it."

"What's that?"

"We're not seeing it astern of us."

The skipper stopped. "Astern? That's so, too —it *is* a fine westerly, isn't it?"

Clancy said nothing, only leaned against the rigging, not a move out of him—puffing his pipe and looking away.

Nobody spoke till the skipper spoke again.

"Who's to the wheel—you, Steve? How's she heading now?'

"No'the by west."

"No'the by west? Put her east by no'the—ease off your mainsheet. Let it go to the knot. Call the gang and make sail—stays'l and balloon—everything—we'll go home, I guess."

Clancy snapped the pipe out of his mouth and hove it over the rail. Then he went for the fore-c's'le gangway. In two jumps he was there.

"Up, you loafers—on deck and make sail. 'To

the east'ard,' says the skipper, and over the shoals we'll put her to-night."

"Home! Home—good enough—and hurroo!" we could hear from below.

The skipper said nothing more—only all night long he walked the quarter.

Next day when we were almost abreast of Cape Cod Clancy began to instruct me. "Here's a tip for any girl friends you got, Joe. See the skipper last night? Tell them if they're after a man—a real man—even if he's a bit shy—tell them—" Oh, the advice that Clancy could give!

About the time that we left Cape Cod light astern and squared away for Thatcher's—with Gloucester Harbor almost in sight—with the rocks of Eastern Point dead ahead—Clancy began to sing again:

> "Oh, a deep blue sky and a deep blue sea
> And a blue-eyed girl awaiting me—
> Too-roo-roo and a too-roo-ree—
> Who wouldn't a Gloucester seiner be?

Ha, Joey-boy?" and gave me a slap on the shoulder that sent me half-way to the break.

That was all right, but I went aloft so I could see the rocks of Cape Ann a mite sooner. I was just beginning to discover that I had been almost homesick.

XXI

SEINERS' WORK

WE were high line of the seining fleet when we got home from the Southern cruise and we felt pretty proud of ourselves. It was something to stand on the corner on one of the days when the Johnnie was fitting out again, and have other fellows come up to you and say, "What's that they say you fellows shared on the Southern trip?" And when we'd tell them, and we trying not to throw out our chests too much, it was fine to hear them say, "That so? Lord, but that's great. Well, if Maurice only holds out he'll make a great season of it, won't he?"

"Oh, he'll hold out," we'd say, and lead the way down to the Anchorage or some other place for a drink or a cigar, for of course, with the money we'd made, we naturally felt like spending some of it on those who were not doing so well. And of course, too, no seiner could ever resist anybody who talks to him in a nice friendly way like that.

The skipper's doings ashore interested all of his crew, of course, although me, perhaps, more than

anybody else, unless it was Clancy. I got pretty regular bulletins from my cousin Nell. She was for the skipper, first, last and all the time.

"I like him," she said to me more than a dozen times. "I do like him, but I never imagined that a man who does so well at sea could shrink into himself as he does. Why, you almost have to haul him out by the ears ashore. If it weren't for me I really believe—" and she stopped.

But I thought I understood what she meant. "Meaning your chum, Alice Foster?" I said.

"Yes, meaning my chum, Alice Foster. Why?"

"Oh, I don't know. Sometimes I think she's a kind of a frost."

"No, she isn't a frost, and don't you come around here again and tell me so."

Nor did I, for I would not have an argument with Nell for all the Alice Fosters in the world, for if Nell were anybody else but my first cousin, I think I would have fallen in love with her myself.

And then we put out to sea and again we were living the life of seiners, having it hard and easy in streaks. There were the times when we went along for a week and did not do a tap but eat, sleep, stand a trick at the wheel, a watch to the masthead, and skylark around the deck, and read, or have a quiet game of draw or whist or seven-up below. But again there were times when we were

on fish, and our skipper being a driver, it was jump, jump, jump for a week on end. There was that time in August when the fish were so plentiful on Georges Bank, when, standing to the masthead, you could see nothing but mackerel schooling for fifteen or twenty miles either side of the vessel. But, oh, they were wild! A dozen times we'd heave the seine—put off from the vessel, put out that two hundred and odd fathom of twine, drive seine-boat and dory to the limit, purse in—and not so much as a single mackerel caught by the gills. That happened fifteen or twenty times some days, maybe. We got our fill of sets that month. But then again there was a week off Cape Cod and in the Bay of Fundy and off the Maine coast when we ran them fresh to Boston market, when we landed more mackerel it was said in a single week than was ever landed before by one vessel. We were five days and five nights that time without seeing our bunks. It was forever out and after them, heave the seine, purse up and bail in, ice some, and dress the rest along the way, and the vessel with everything on driving for Boston.

We stood to it that week, you may be sure, until coming on the fifth day some of us fell asleep over the keelers as the Johnnie was coming into T Wharf. I remember that I could just barely see in a kind of a hazy way the row of people along the

cap-log when we made fast. And yet after that we had to hoist them out of the hold and onto the dock. That day, going out again, the skipper made all but the watch and himself turn in. That afternoon, when everybody had had a little kink, the skipper himself, who had been under a heavier strain than any of us, suddenly fell backward over the house and sound asleep. And there he lay all the rest of that day and that night.

After ten or twelve hours of it we tried to wake him, but not a budge. We tried again, but no use. At last he came to and without any help at all. Sitting up, he asked where we were, and being told, he said nothing for a moment or so, and then suddenly—"That so? How long was I asleep?" We told him—seventeen hours. "Good Lord!" he groaned, and after a mug-up scooted for the masthead like a factory hand with the seven o'clock whistle blowing. "He's a fisherman, the skipper," said the gang as they watched him climb the rigging.

And he was a fisherman. All that summer he drove things with but little time for us ashore. Twice he put into Gloucester with a day to ourselves and another time we had a chance to run down after we had put into Boston for market, and that we suspected was because the skipper found he could not keep away himself any longer.

Things, we judged, were going pretty well with him in Gloucester. He did not pretend any longer now that he was not interested in Miss Foster, and from my cousin Nell I got occasional hints, most of which I confided to Clancy, who explained them as if they were so many parables.

"It'll be all right," said Clancy, "if only Minnie Arkell stands clear. I'm glad she's away for the summer, but she'll turn up in the fall. You'll see her just before the race large as life, and some of her swell-dressed friends, and a yacht, I'll bet."

Considering how deeply the skipper was interested in Miss Foster, some of us thought he ought to be putting in a little time ashore between trips. After a run into the Boston fresh fish market, say, we would have liked mighty well to take in the theatre, or a trip to the beach, or some other little entertainment of a night. But no, it was in and out—drive, drive, drive.

He was all ambition, the skipper. He was going to be up front or break something. Miss Foster was one of the ambitious kind, too. If she was going to have a fisherman, he would have to be a killer or she would know why. And so I suppose that had a lot to do with the way the skipper drove things.

We had our loafing spells, as I say, but mostly it was plenty of work. That time when we stayed

awake for five days and nights was not the only one. Another time our legs swelled up and the blood came out of the ends of our fingers with standing up to the keelers and dressing fish without rest. But, Lord, nobody minded that. After we'd got rested up we felt better than ever.

We had good luck generally. We lost neither men nor gear to amount to anything that summer. That seine we lost trying for our first school to the s'uth'ard in the spring was the only bit of misfortune that came, and we had long ago made up for that. But others were not so lucky. There was the loss of the Ruth Ripley, Pitt Ripley's vessel. I think I have said that she was a fast vessel. She was fast—fast, but of the cranky type. We were jogging along a little to windward of her one fine afternoon—it had been a fine September day and now it was coming on to evening. To the westward of Cape Sable, in the Bay of Fundy, it was, and no hint of a blow up to within a few minutes of the time when the squall struck the Ruth. I suppose it would have been more prudent on Pitt's part if he had had less sail on, but like most of the skippers in the fleet I guess he was not looking for any record for prudence. Any minute he might have to be up and driving her, and keeping sail on was the quickest way to have it when you needed it in a hurry. The squall hit her—it hit us, too, but

we saw it coming and met it and beyond washing a few keelers overboard, when she rolled down, no harm was done to the Johnnie. On the Ripley, I suppose, they saw it too, but the Ripley and the Duncan were not the same class of vessel by any means. She went over — hove down, with her foremast under water to the cross-trees almost.

Most of her crew were below at the time, some in their bunks. Four or five of those below never reached the deck at all—the water rushing down the companionways cut them off. Some rushed aft where the stern was high out of water and some piled into the rigging. Some were calling out and giving advice to others. We could hear them plainly. Two jumped to the wheel and threw it up, but she would not right.

We had the Johnnie to keep right side up, but we saw the whole thing. It could not have been more than two or three minutes from the time the squall struck her when she was going down head-first. Those of her crew who had gone to the stern were going with her, but those who had taken to the rigging, by leaping wide came clear. Their seine-boat, which had been towing astern, might have been of use to them, but being fast to the vessel by the painter it was pretty well filled with water before anybody had a chance to cut the painter.

The man that cut it went down with the vessel. He was all right, whoever he was. Those in the water were looking about for the dory, and found that half full of water, too. They were trying to bail the water out of the dory, after hauling it across the bow of the submerged seine-boat, when we got them in our seine-boat and picked up what was left of them.

Nine of them were lost, her skipper among them. One of the men saved—the cook—said that when the squall struck the vessel, Captain Ripley had been seen to jump for the boom tackle, which he unhitched, and then to spring for the lashings of the dory, which he cut with his knife. The cook also said that he thought the skipper lost his life because of the half-stunning blow that he must have received from the fore-boom while he was on the rail trying to free the dory. The vessel was sinking all the time and it being dark—or near it in the squall—I suppose Captain Ripley could not watch everything. No doubt, it was the fore-boom hit him and knocked him overboard. Certainly he was knocked overboard, and the last seen of him he was swimming and pushing an empty barrel before him to one of the crew. "Keep your nerve up," he called to the cook, and after that he suddenly disappeared. He got a man's death, anyway.

We rowed back to the Duncan with the survivors. Nine men gone—it was a hard story to take home with us, but we had it to do. It was all a part of fishing life, and so we put back for Gloucester.

XXII

ON THE CAPE SHORE

WHILE we were into Gloucester, after taking home the crew of the Ruth Ripley, our vessel was put on the ways. That was after a talk between the skipper and Mr. Duncan. There is always something that needs attending to on a fisherman, and this time it was our water-tanks. And while they were being looked after, the Johnnie was overhauled, her bottom scrubbed and topsides painted. Old Mr. Duncan, we found, was beginning to take a lot of pride in our vessel and balked at no expense to have her in trim. And now that the Ripley was lost, he would have only two vessels to represent him in the big fishermen's race, which was then only four weeks away.

"Hurry up home now," he said to Maurice as we left the dock that time. "Hurry up, and give yourself plenty of time to tune her up and get her in trim for the race. I've set my heart on it. You or the Lucy Foster must win that race, and whatever else we do we've got to beat Withrow's vessel, anyway."

And Miss Foster said that one of her guardian's vessels would have to win the race, and my cousin Nell said that the Johnnie Duncan would have to win. There was a lot depending on it, she said. It meant a lot to Will Somers, I suppose Nell meant.

We figured that we had time to make a Cape shore trip, and, with fair luck, to fill the Johnnie with salt mackerel and be back in time to get her in good condition for the race, which this year, because it was anniversary year in Gloucester, promised to be the greatest ever sailed.

Our plans were somewhat interfered with by a rescue we made. We found a Glasgow bark, New York bound, in the Bay of Fundy, and her crew in hard straits. We stood down and after a lot of trouble took them off—Clancy and Long Steve in the dory. Billie Hurd came near being the second man in the dory, but Clancy, grabbing him as he had one foot over the rail, hauled him back with, "Way for your elders, little man," and jumped in beside Long Steve.

"Elders, but not betters," said Hurd.

"Have it your own way," answered Clancy, "but I go in the dory."

The rescue was really a fine thing, but the important thing was that some of the rescued men had been exposed to the battering of the sea so

long that they needed medical attention, and so we drove for home—and cracked our foremast-head doing it. That delayed us almost a week, for the skipper had to have that spar just so. A lot might depend on it, same as the rest of the gear. And it was a spar—as fine a bit of timber, Oregon pine of course, as was ever set up in a fisherman. And maybe that too was just as well, with the race coming on.

By the time we were down the Cape shore—down Canso way—and among the fleet again, we had lost a week. Our hold was still to fill up, and only two weeks and a day to the race. Wesley Marrs, Tom O'Donnell, Sam Hollis, and the rest were then talking of going home and making ready for the race. Bottoms would have to be scrubbed, extra gear put ashore—a whole lot of things done—and a few try-outs in the Bay by way of tuning up.

The race was the talk of all the fleet. Half the crews on the Cape shore wanted to be in Gloucester when the race came off, and some of the skippers of the slower vessels, which would not enter because they had no show to win, were already scheming to be home just before the race so that they could be on hand to follow it.

The morning after we were back among the fleet we got a small school right from under the

eyes of the Lynx, one of the English cutters which were patrolling the coast to see that we didn't get any fish within the three-mile limit. I remember that while we were satisfied at the time that we were outside the line, we did not know what the revenue-cutter might say, and particularly the Lynx, whose captain had a hard name among our fleet for his readiness to suspect law-breaking when there wasn't any. The cutter people generally seemed to want to be fair toward us, but this Lynx's captain was certainly a vindictive cuss. Anything hailing from Gloucester was an abomination in his eyes. And so this morning, when, after we had decided that we were outside the limit, and made ready to set, it was hard to have to take the order of the Lynx and sheer off. Our judgment of distance ought to have been as good as his —better, really, we thought it, because we were always judging distances at sea, and more at home upon the sea, too. But that made no difference— what the cutter people said had to be law for us.

So this time he ordered us not to set where we were or he'd seize our vessel. Several Gloucester vessels had been confiscated just before this and the owners had to pay the fine to recover them. One owner disputed the judgment and his case was then waiting settlement. Another who refused to pay saw his vessel turned into a lightship and placed

down Miramichi way in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where it is yet. This day the commander of the Lynx might have some reason to think that his order ended that for us—and we could almost see him chuckling—but it didn't. A fog was creeping up at the time and in ten minutes it was on us, and under cover of the fog we got a little school—the same school we thought and on the exact spot where the cutter was lying when she ordered us off. Didn't we cackle though when we bailed it in? Oh, no! It was not much of a school—only twenty barrels—but it made us all feel fine. Not alone did we feel that we had got the better of the English cutter, but also that luck was coming to us again. We justified ourselves by saying that we honestly believed we were outside the three-mile limit, and that our judgment was as good as theirs.

That night the forec's'le of the Johnnie Duncan presented one of the most beatific scenes I ever saw. Everybody was in the temper of an angel. There was nothing doing—no whist at the table, no reading out of upper bunks, no love song from the peak, and no fierce argument on the lockers. We were discussing the cutters and the talk was very soothing. The cook, as usual, was finishing up a batch of dough. You might have thought he was the only man who had been working in a week, were it not for the wet oil-clothes hanging up to

dry, and the overhauling of second suits of oil-clothes by some of the gang. Every man, except the cook, who never smoked while at work, was puffing away as if he misdoubted he would ever get another chance for a pipeful in his life. "Harmony most ex-quis-ite," said somebody, and that's what must have been that hung over the forec's'le, and it seemed to be merely in keeping with the heavenly order of things that the atmosphere showed pale blue wherever the rays of the lamp could get a chance to strike through.

When Clancy dropped down for his usual mug-up before going to the mast-head for the night of course, he wasn't going to let that get by without having a word to say about it. He leaned against the foremast and took a look around. "My soul, but it's as if the blessed angels were fanning their wings over this forehold. There's Brian Boru and Lord Salisbury there double-banked on the same locker, and nothing doing on any Irish question. There's the lad that sleeps in the peak and not a single hallelujah of praise for his darling Lucille. The other one—the wild man that sings the Bobbie Burns songs—not a shriek out of him. And Bill and John no longer spoiling their eyesight on bad print. I expect it's that little school of fish—the first in two weeks or more. The prospect must be making you all pleased. Well, it

ought. A few hundred barrels of that kind of mackerel—as fine fish as ever I see bailed over the rail. And some of you ready reck'ners ought to easily figure up what'll be coming to us if we ever fill her up—say five hundred barrels. A good thing—a few hundred barrels of mackerel. A few too many of 'em for good trim, but it's comforting to know they're there. She seemed to be in pretty nice trim when we tried out one or two of the fleet this morning, didn't she? And to-night, if it breezes up—and it looks now as if it will—we'll get some more—if it's a night like last night. One time there last night—did you notice her, cook?—that time that crazy lad started to cross our bow and we luffed her. Why, man, she shot over like I don't know what—just shot like one of those torpedo boats we see around when the Navy goes evoluting. I was near shook overboard from aloft. They tell me they're going crazy over the race in Gloucester. Well, here's one that'll bet his summer's earnings——"

"What's left of it, you mean, Tommie," said George Moore from his pan of dough.

"Well, yes, what's left of it—and what I c'n borrow. Old man Duncan'll stake me, and there's others. I hope, though, it blows a jeesly gale. For this one, God bless her, she c'n sail, and some of them'll find it out—when it's too late, maybe. Sam

Hollis for one. There's a man I'd give my eye almost, to beat. And maybe the skipper hasn't got it in for him! He doesn't say much, Maurice don't, but a while ago, after coming down from aloft, Billie Simms hails him and tells him that the cutter people know all about that little school to-day—and who told him, who told him? Well, the skipper'll drive this one to the bottom before he ever lets Sam Hollis or any of Withrow's vessels get by him when we race. Yes, sir. But, Georgie-boy"—Clancy shouldered away from the foremast—"how is it for a wedge or two of one of those blueberry pies you got cooling there? Just a little wedge, now. But you don't need to be too close-hauled with your knife—no. Sailing by the wind is all right when you're jogging in and out among the fleet, and nothing partic'lar doing except an eye out for mackerel, but you want to give her a full always—always, Georgie—when you're cutting pie. There's the lad—straight across the beam. And now at right angles again. And now lay one atop of the other, and you have it—an invention of my own—a blueberry sandwich. M-m—but look at the juice squish through her scuppers!" He held it up for all of us to have a look. "Now another little wash of coffee in the wake of that and I'll be all right for a fine little watch aloft."

He jammed his sou'wester hard down, and heroically waved away the remainder of the pie. "No, no. First thing I know I'll be having dyspepsia. I never had it yet, but I might," and then heaved himself up the companionway, humming, as he went, one of his old favorites:

> " Oh, the 'Liza Jane and the Maria Louise
> Sailed a race one day for a peck of peas.
> You'd hardly believe the way them two
> Carried sail that day—they fairly flew.
>
> People ashore they said, ' Gee whiz!
> The 'Liza Jane the fastest is.' "

We could hear him scrambling, still humming, over the barrels on deck. He halted long enough by the rail to say, "How is it, boys?" to the watch on deck, and then swung himself up the rigging. Once aloft he had his work cut out, with hours of strain on brain and nerve. But Clancy never minded—he never minded anything so far as we could make out.

XXIII

DRESSING DOWN

THAT night was the worst I ever put in towing astern of a vessel. "Owling" is the seiners' word for that kind of work. It was "owling" sure enough, with the seine-boat on a short painter and the dory on a shorter painter still and astern of the seine-boat again. We came near to being lost in the dory. Mel Adams, who was in the dory with me, thinking she was surely going to capsize one time she rode up over the stern of the seine-boat, took a flying leap into the seine-boat. He had a hard time getting back, for there was quite a little sea on. Even in the seine-boat they were all glad enough to hear Clancy give the word to cast off and pull after the school.

It was a big school, and hard work in that sea, but we had them safe at last. The vessel then came alongside and the bailing in began. Having had a good long lay-off we bailed them in with plenty of good-will. It was "He-yew!" "Oy-hoo!" "Hi-o!" and "Drive her!" all along the line until we had on deck what the skipper thought was a hundred barrels. Then the bag was put around

the seine to protect the rest of the mackerel from dogfish and sharks, and we were ready to dress.

Barrels were tossed out of the hold, keelers set up, sharp-edged knives drawn from diddy-boxes below, and a chance had to see a smart crew dressing a haul of mackerel that were to be salted. It was too long a run, four hundred miles or so, to take a chance of getting them fresh to market. It needed a fair and fresh breeze to be sure of it, and besides with the market for salt mackerel getting stronger all the time it was good judgment to salt down and fill her up before going home.

We had been through the same thing before, even with as good a deck-load, but now we were getting near the end of the season. This trip, then the race, and maybe one more trip after the race, and we would be done seining. And so we drove things.

Four gangs of four men each took corners in the waist. Each gang had two keelers—yard square boxes, eight inches or so in depth, and set up on two or three barrels. Into the keelers the mackerel on deck were bailed and around them the men gathered, with long-handled torches set up all about.

All hands came into the dressing—skipper and cook too—and the work went on. It was one gang against the other, each jealously counting

barrels when they were filled, that full credit might be given for speed. Sixteen men were accounted for in this way. The seventeenth and eighteenth were to keep the keelers filled, draw water for pickle from over the side, roll the filled barrels out of the way—in short, to help out generally.

It was fine to watch the splitters. One left-handed grab and the mackerel was in place, flat and smooth, one right-handed slit and he was laid open the length of his back. Forty-five mackerel a minute either the skipper, Clancy or Moore could split—that is, pick them up, place in position, split from nose to tail along the back, and slide out of the way again. Sixty a minute they could do in spurts, if somebody would place the mackerel in rows for them.

The busiest man of all was the skipper. He had to keep an eye out for the course of the Johnnie. Vessels that are dressing fish, vessels on which the entire crew are soaked in blood, gills, intestines, and swashing brine, might be allowed privileges, one might think; but no, they must keep a lookout just the same. On this dark night, the Johnnie Duncan, though making a great effort—considering that she had jibs down and wheel in the becket—to stay as she was put, yet would fall away or come-to, especially when the wind shifted two or three points at a jump. And just as soon as she

did the skipper would notice it instantly, jump aft and set her right. Generally, to shift the wheel a few spokes would be enough, but now and then he would have to give the wheel a good round whirl. At such a time he would sing out a warning, the torches would be lowered, we would duck our heads, the boom would go swinging by in the smoky yellow glare, and the Johnnie Duncan would be off on another tack. We would brace our legs to a new angle, the skipper would hop back to his knife, and again the dressing would go humming along.

When we had the first hundred barrels of mackerel swashing in brine, the rest of them, perhaps another hundred barrels, were bailed in. And all night long like that we stood to it driving. Under the yellow and smoky light of the torches I could see nothing but mackerel or the insides of mackerel in the air. Keelers, deck, rail, our hands, faces, boots and oilskins were sticky with the blood and gurry. At top speed we raced like that through the night. Once in a while a man would drop his knife or snap off his gibbing mitt, rinse his hand in the brine barrel by his side, slap his hand across the hoops, and condemn the luck of a split finger or a thumb with a fish-bone in it. Another might pull up for a moment, glance up at the stars or down at the white froth under the

rail, draw his hand across his forehead, mutter, "My soul, but I'm dry," take a full dipper from the water-pail, drink it dry, pass dipper and pail along to the next and back to his work.

When the cook called out for breakfast we were still at it, with the deck of the vessel covered with barrels of pickling mackerel. It was beginning to get light then. "Oh, the blessed day's coming on. Smother the torches, boys," said the skipper, and led the way below for the first table to have a bite.

Before the sun came up we were beginning to make out the rest of the fleet. One after another they were coming into view, their long hulls and high spars reaching across the wind. Between the gray sky and the slaty sea their white sails looked whiter than chalk.

We had to name the different vessels then. "There's Tom O'Donnell—and Wesley Marrs—and Sam Hollis—and—" sung out Andie Howe.

"Sam Hollis—where's Sam Hollis?" broke in Mel Adams.

"Away to the east'ard, ain't it, Andie?—the fellow with jibs down?" spoke up Billie Hurd, who was a bit proud that he too could pick her out at such a distance.

"So it is, ain't it?" said Mel, and he began to tell our troubles in the dory. " 'Twas him near ran

over us last night—remember, Joe? Leastways, it looked like Hollis's new one's quarter goin' by. He was pointin' 'bout no'the-east then, but he couldn't 've held on that tack long or he'd be somewhere up by Miquelon and not here this mornin'—the gait he was goin'. Man, but there was smoke coming out of his scuppers when he went by. 'Why don't y' come aboard whilst you're about it—come aboard and be sociable,' I hollers. 'Oh, don't cry, y' ain't hurted,' says whoever's to the wheel of her. Least it sounded like that, 'Y' ain't hurted,' he says."

"Must have been pretty close, Mel?" said Clancy, never stopping, but keeping a string of split mackerel rolling into his keeler. Mel and I were gibbing for Clancy.

"Close? I could've touched his chain-plates like that," and Mel, getting excited, reached his mittened hand across the keeler and touched Clancy on the arm. Clancy's knife took a jump and cut a finger. For a few seconds Clancy laid down the law of a splitting knife to Mel, but Mel didn't mind.

"That's just about the way I swore at the man to the wheel of the Withrow. Didn't I, Joe? Yes, sir, I cert'nly swore at him good, but it no more jarred him than—but when their seine-boat came by, half of 'em smokin', some half-breed

among 'em has to sing out, 'Y'ought to hang up a riding light if your vessel's hove-to,' he says. What do you think of that, Tommie—'if your vessel's hove-to!'—and if the Johnnie was going one she was going ten knots an hour."

"That's right, Mel—I heard you to the masthead," said Clancy. Clancy heard it about as much as old Mr. Duncan back in Gloucester did, but he was always ready to help a man out.

"Did you? Well, I hove-to him. I hove the bailer at him, that's what I did, and he ducked. But he ducked too late, I callate, for 'Bam!' it caught him—or somebody in the seine-boat with him. He swore some, or somebody swore, you c'n bet. 'I don't know who y'are,' he hollers, 'but if ever I meet you ashore,' and he was so far away then I couldn't ketch no more of it. 'Don't know who y'are, but if I ketch you ashore'—Lord——"

"So, if a lad with a bump on the side of his head waltzes up to you on Main Street and whangs you, Mel, next time you're ashore in Gloucester, what'll you do?" asked Clancy.

"I'll say, 'Where's that bailer, you loafer?' but first I'll whang him back. I had to finish the bailing out with my sou'wester. I sings out to Andie Howe in the boat here to hand me one of the bailers in the boat. 'I'm usin' my hat,' I hollers, 'and Joe's using his sou'wester,' thinkin' that would

fetch him all right. 'Well, we're usin' ten sou'-westers here,' says Andie, 'and one or two of 'em leaks,' and that was all the satisfaction I got."

"Yes," said Eddie Parsons, "the seine-boat was sure wallerin' then. The skipper had only just told Jimmie Gunn to quit his growling. 'You'll be wanting hot-water bags to your feet next, I suppose,' says the skipper."

"I was thinking of the boat—afraid she'd be so logy with the water in her that we couldn't drive her when the time came," bristled up Jimmie Gunn to that.

"Y-yah!" snorted Eddie, "if you weren't scared, then I never saw a man scared. Logy? I notice we made her hop along all right after we cast off from the vessel. Man, but she fair hurdled some of them seas—some of the little ones, I mean. Didn't she, Steve? We thought we'd lost Joe and you, Mel, in the dory, didn't we, fellows?"

"You did, hey? Well, you didn't, nor nowheres near it," broke in Mel. "We were right there with the goods when they hove the seine, warn't we, Joey?"

And so it went on through all that day, while the men worked, dressing, salting, and putting all in pickle. It was a drive all through without any quitting by anybody, except when it was time to relieve lookouts at the masthead. In the middle

of it all, had the call of "School-O!" been heard from aloft, we would have been only too glad to drop everything, jump into the boat and dory, get after the mackerel, and do the same thing over—split, gibb and pack away—for all of the next night, and the night after that—for a week if necessary.

Not until well into the afternoon, when the last mackerel was flattened out in its barrel, did any of us feel that we could step back in our own time, straighten ourselves out, and take a look over our work. Then we counted the oozing barrels with great satisfaction, you may be sure, even while we were massaging our swollen wrists with our aching fingers. It was a good bit of work that, well and quickly done, and it was fine to get a rest after it, although it might be only for a little while. Even though we had to do it all over again—to stay half-drowned and chilled through in the seine-boat or dory for half the night and then dress down for eighteen or twenty hours on top of it—what did a little hard work matter? "Think of the hundred-dollar bill, maybe, to be carried home and laid in the wife's lap," said Long Steve.

"Or the roaring night ashore when a fellow's not a family man—m-m—!" said Eddie Parsons. Eddie was not a family man.

XXIV

THE WITHROW OUTSAILS THE DUNCAN

WE certainly were feeling pretty good along about that time, and we felt better when next day, cruising in and out among the fleet, other crews began to take notice of our catch. By that time the word had gone around. One after another they came sailing up—as if to size us up was the last thing that could enter their heads—rounding to, and then a hail. Something like this it went:

"Hulloh, Maurice."

"Hulloh, Wesley," or George Drake, or Al McNeill, or whoever it might be.

"That's a mighty pretty deckload of fish. When'd y'get 'em?"

"Oh, twenty barrels yesterday morning and the rest last night."

"That so? How many d'y'call 'em, Maurice?"

"How many? Oh, two hundred and eighty or ninety wash barrels. Ought to head up about two sixty."

"That so? Fine, Maurice, fine. As handsome a deckload as I've seen this year."

And he would bear off, and another vessel would come and go through the same ceremony. It was very satisfying to us and the skipper must have felt proud. Not that a lot bigger hauls had not been made by other men before—indeed, yes, and by the very men perhaps who were complimenting him. But three hundred barrels, or near it, in pickle at one time does look fine on a vessel's deck, and they looked especially fine at this time because there was not another vessel in the fleet that had half as many, so far as we knew.

Not another but Sam Hollis—or so he claimed. He came ranging up that same day and began asking how the Duncan was sailing lately, and followed that up by saying he himself had two hundred odd barrels in the hold. He showed about sixty wash barrels on deck. We did not believe he had twenty below. She looked cork light. "If she sets as high out of water with two hundred and forty barrels, then you ought to put two hundred and forty more in her and she'd fly," called out Clancy to Hollis, and that was pretty much what we all thought.

And 'twas Sam Hollis made trouble for the Duncan that day. He bore off then but came back in the afternoon. More talk there was, and it wound up by our racing with him. We did not start out to race, but gradually, as we found our-

selves jogging along side by side, jibs were drawn away and sheets began to be trimmed. The first thing we knew we found ourselves swaying up sails, and then before we really woke up to it we were both off and away before a little breeze.

Hollis had all the best of it. He was bound to, with the Duncan carrying most of her mackerel aft and away down by the stern. Even had we had time to—we did shift some of it forward—we were too deep for any kind of racing in that moderate breeze. We said that to ourselves, anyway, and yet we held on. But it was no use—it wound up by Hollis giving us a scandalous beating. And after running away from us he kept straight on to the westward, and by that we knew that he was bound for Gloucester to get ready for the big race.

The skipper felt it. He was one that took things to heart.

"I've been bragging about this one—what she could do. I told the old man only the last time we were in that he could go broke that I'd beat Sam Hollis, and here the first time we come together he makes her look like a wood-carrier. The best thing I can do, I guess, is to keep out of the race; maybe it will save the old man some money. I expected he'd beat us, the trim we were in—but to beat us the way he did!"

Nothing the crew could say seemed to make him think otherwise, and that night it was not nearly so joyful below in the Johnnie Duncan. The talk was that she would not go home for the race. Only Clancy seemed to be as cheerful as ever. "Don't any of you get to worrying," he said. "I know the skipper—the Johnnie Duncan'll be there when the time comes."

Yet next morning when Wesley Marrs went by us with the Lucy Foster bound for home and sang out, "Come along, Maurice, and get ready for the race—we'll have a brush on the way," our skipper only waved his hand and said, "No—this old plug can't sail." Wesley looked mighty puzzled at that, but kept on his way.

XXV

TROUBLE WITH THE DOMINION CUTTERS

NEXT day after, in a calm, Clancy and I had to take the dory and row out among the fleet for some salt. The skipper thought it likely that some of the vessels that were going home might have salt to spare. He doubted if he himself would have enough in case we struck another good school. So we rowed out. We went from one vessel to another without any luck, until we found ourselves aboard Tom O'Donnell — the Colleen Bawn. And just as we got aboard a school showed near by her, and they made a dash for it. The Colleen was pretty well in-shore then, and yet safe outside the three-mile limit in our judgment. Even in the judgment of one of the Canadian revenue cutters, the Mink, she was outside the limit. "You're all right, go ahead," her commander sang out from the bridge.

Yet trouble came of it. The Colleen's gang were making a set when along came the Lynx, the same cutter that had ordered our own skipper not to set two or three days back in the fog, and we had set in spite of him. I think I said that he had a

bad reputation among our fleet. In this case some said afterwards that he had been watching the Duncan since that time, and having seen a dory put out from her and go aboard Tom O'Donnell, that he then had a special watch for O'Donnell. Anyway, we know that as the Colleen Bawn's crew were pursing in the seine he came along and ordered them to cast loose the fish. "You're inside the limit," said this fellow now.

"I may be, but I don't think so," said O'Donnell to that.

"You're inside and you know it."

"You're a liar if you say I know it."

O'Donnell had had trouble with the Lynx before, and had small patience with her captain. More words came out of it, and while they were talking back and forth another of the fleet a mile to the east'ard put out a boat.

The cutter went after him, her captain singing out as he went, "You wait here till I come back." "Wait like hell!" said O'Donnell, "and this breeze making," and continued to purse up. Pursed up, the fish aboard—there were forty or fifty barrels—he started off. One of those sudden breezes were springing up and it promised to be wind enough to suit anybody. We made out the Johnnie Duncan bearing down, intending no doubt to take off Clancy and me. But the cutter was coming toward

us then, and O'Donnell said we had better stay aboard or we would be picked up on the way by the cutter's people and maybe get the Duncan and our skipper into trouble. That last—the thought that our skipper or the vessel might get mixed up in it—kept us aboard the Colleen Bawn.

The Lynx could steam as fast as any cutter they had on the Cape shore at that time, but the Colleen was a witch and O'Donnell a wonder at sailing her. So we stayed with O'Donnell and watched him and the cutter have it out. They had it, the cutter letting drive a shot every once in a while. The first shot, I remember, went whistling by the ear of one of O'Donnell's crew who was standing back-to in the waist, and so astonished him, he not expecting it, that he fell into the forehold. He raised a great racket among a lot of empty barrels. The fall never hurt him, but the things he said when he came on deck again! O'Donnell made him lie flat—and then all of us but Clancy, who refused to lie down but compromised by leaning over the house and watching the cutter and making comments on her actions for the benefit of the rest of us. Through it all O'Donnell stood to the wheel and the nearest he came to honoring the cutter by a compliment was when he'd half turn his head, spit over the rail and swear at her. The wind and sea-way together were too

much for the cutter. The Colleen left her behind, and she at last drew off after bunching a few farewell shots.

O'Donnell then hove-to and took his seine-boat on deck. He had been towing it the wrong end foremost for the whole forty miles, and he was worried over it. "It's strained her maybe—and she almost a new boat," he lamented. "For the rest I don't care. That lad had it in for me all along. The other one though, he's decent—never bothers a man without a little reason. I was going home anyway for the race, and so it don't matter. I suppose Maurice will be along soon, Tommie? Did you see him coming after the cutter—he held her fine and he in no trim. What's it they say about Hollis beating the Johnnie yesterday? If he did, be sure he was specially prepared, and the Johnnie had an off-day. But I suppose he'll be holding on now for Gloucester?"

Clancy said maybe, but no telling, and explained how it had been—the skipper's discouragement after Hollis had beaten him.

O'Donnell said he was foolish to worry over a thing like that. "I know Sam Hollis," he said—"'twas a trap he laid for Maurice. He's got a smart vessel in the Withrow, but he can't run away from Maurice. No, nor beat him I doubt—with both in trim. But wait a while—let the day of the

race get near and Maurice to thinking it over, and you'll see him flyin' home."

We hoped so. For ourselves we went home on the Colleen. There was nothing else for us to do. We had quite a time of it that trip with O'Donnell. He sailed about five hundred miles out of his way—away to the eastward and s'uth'ard. There might be cruisers and cutters galore after him, he said—they might put out from Halifax, or telegraph ahead—you couldn't tell what they might do, he said, and so he sailed the Colleen out to sea. But we came across the Bay one dark night without sidelights, and reached Boston all right. O'Donnell had a suit of sails stowed away in an East Boston wharf that he wanted to get out for the race. And also he didn't like his new foremast and was going to have a new one put in if there was time.

XXVI

THE GOSSIP IN GLOUCESTER

CLANCY and I went home by train, reaching Gloucester as the first of an easterly gale set in. There we found it was nothing but talk of the race. We had not reached Main Street at all before Clancy was held up. Clancy, of course, would know. Where was Maurice Blake? What were we doing in Gloucester and the Johnnie not in? The Duncans—especially the elder Mr. Duncan—Miss Foster, my cousin Nell, and Will Somers were boiling over. Where was Maurice Blake? Where was the Johnnie Duncan? Everybody in town seemed to know that Sam Hollis had given us a bad beating down Cape shore way, and the news had a mighty discouraging effect on all Maurice's friends, even on those of them who knew enough of Sam Hollis not to take his talk just as he wanted them to take it. Withrow's vessel had beaten the Johnnie Duncan with Maurice Blake sailing her—they had to believe that part of it, and that in itself was bad enough. Sam Hollis's stock was booming, you may be sure—and the race right close to hand, too.

"That little beating the Johnnie got didn't lose any in the telling by Sam Hollis and his gang, did it, Joe?" said Clancy to me, and then he went around borrowing all the money he could to bet the Johnnie Duncan would beat the Withrow in the race. But would Maurice now enter at all? I asked Clancy about that part—if there was not a chance that Maurice might not stay down the Cape shore way and let the race go. But he only laughed and said, "Lord—Joey-boy, you've a lot to learn yet about Maurice in spite of your season's seining along with him."

It was a Monday morning when Clancy and I reached Gloucester. The race was to be sailed on Friday of that same week. For several days before this, we were told, Wesley Marrs, Sam Hollis, Tommie Ohlsen, and the rest of them had been out in the Bay tuning up their vessels like a lot of cup defenders. Never before had fishermen given so much attention to the little details before a race. The same day that we got home they were up on the ways for a final polishing and primping up. They were smooth as porcelain when they came off. And coming off their skippers thought they had better take some of the ballast out of them. " 'Tisn't as if it was winter weather"—it was the middle of September then—"with big seas and driving gales," was the way Wesley Marrs put

it, and they all agreed that the chances were ten to one that the wind would not be strong enough to call for the heavy ballast they carried. Fishermen, of course, are built to be at their best when wind and sea are doing their worst, and so the taking out of ballast for a September race looked like good judgment. So about forty tons of ballast were taken out of most of them—the Lucy Foster, the Withrow, the Nannie O, and half a dozen others.

That looked all right, but on Tuesday night an easterly gale set in, the wind blowing forty-odd miles an hour. All day Wednesday it blew, and all day Thursday even harder, with a promise of blowing harder still on Friday, which was to be the day of the race. The people of Gloucester who had been praying for wind, "Wind for a fisherman's race—wind—wind," seemed likely to get what they wanted.

On Thursday I saw Tommie Ohlsen and Wesley Marrs in conference on the street. Wesley had his nose up in the air, sniffing the breeze. He shook his head with, "Tommie, I ought to've let the ballast stay in the Lucy. It looks like it's going to be the devil's own breeze for vessels that ain't prepared for it."

"Yes," said Ohlsen, "wind fifty-two mile an hour the weather man says, and still making.

That's bad for light ballast and whole sail. If we could only put the ballast back——"

"Yes—if we could. But we can't put it back now—there ain't time to do it right and everybody would laugh at us too. And besides, if we did, all the others would put it back, and where's the difference?"

"Of course," said Tommie, "but if all of us would put it back it would make a better race."

In view of the reputation of Wesley Marrs and Ohlsen and O'Donnell and their vessels, we could not understand the confidence of Withrow and his people in Sam Hollis. He had a great vessel—nobody doubted it. But it was doubted by many if she was the equal of some of the others, and few believed she was better. And Sam Hollis was not the man to carry the sail, or at least the fishermen of Gloucester generally did not think so. But Withrow and Hollis's gang kept on bragging and they backed their bragging up, too. I drew what money I had saved that summer out of my seining share—two hundred and twenty-five dollars—and bet it myself with one of the Withrow's crew that the Johnnie Duncan would beat the Withrow, whether the Johnnie was home to race or not. It was really betting against Withrow himself, who, it was said, was taking up every bet made by any of the Withrow's crew. That was

Thursday afternoon, and still no word of the Duncan.

"Good for you, Joey," said Clancy when he heard of that. "Even if Maurice don't come it's better to lose your money and shut them up. But don't worry—he'll come. Do you think he's been standing and looking at this easterly—it's all along the coast to Newf'undland I see by the papers—and not swing her off? He's on his way now, and swinging all he's got to her, I'll bet. Wait and see."

"My," said my cousin Nell, "and so you bet your pile on the Johnnie Duncan whether she's in or not?—and if she don't reach here in time you lose it all?" and told it all over to her Will Somers, to whom I learned she was now engaged. And from that time on I noticed that Alice Foster beamed on me like an angel.

Minnie Arkell was home for the race just as Clancy had prophesied. She had come with some of her friends down from Boston three or four days before this, in the same steam-yacht she had been aboard of at Newport in June. Meeting me she asked me about our passage home on the Colleen Bawn, and I told her of it. She listened with great interest.

"Is Tom O'Donnell as fine-looking as he used to be—with his grand figure and head and great

beard? I remember some years ago I used to think him the finest-looking man I ever saw."

I told her that I guessed she'd think him fine-looking yet if she'd seen him to the wheel of the Colleen Bawn with the six-pound shot whistling by him, and he never so much as letting on he knew they were there. Her eyes shone at that. Then she offered to take any bets I made off my hands. "You can't afford to take your little savings out of the bank and bet it on a vessel that may not be here in time. I'll take it off your hands—come!"

That was an attractive side to her—caring but little for money—but I wasn't letting anybody take my bets off my hands. I still believed that Maurice would be home, though that was seven o'clock Thursday evening. I knew he would be home if he only guessed that his friends were betting on his vessel—and they not even knowing whether she was to be home in time for the race. And if he weren't home, I was ready to lose my little roll.

XXVII

IN CLANCY'S BOARDING-HOUSE

FROM Minnie Arkell, whom I met at the door of her own house, I went to Clancy's boarding house. I did not find Clancy then and I went off, but coming back again I found him, and a very busy man he was, with an immense crock of punch between his knees. He was explaining down in the kitchen to the other boarders—fifteen or twenty of the thirstiest-looking fishermen I ever laid eyes on—just how it was he made the punch. The bowl was about the size of a little beer keg.

"On the night of last Fourth of July," he was saying—"and I mind we came in that morning with a hundred and seventy-five barrels we got off Mount Desert—that night I warn't very busy. I gets this crock—four gallons—let you all have a look—a nice cold stony crock you see it is, and that they'd been using then in the house here for piccalilli—and a fine flavor still hanging to it. Wait a minute now till I tell you. It'll taste better, too, after you hear. And into the crock I puts two gallons of rum—fine rum it was—for a bottom. Every good punch has to have a bottom.

It's like the big blocks they put under a house by way of a foundation, or the ballast down near the keel of a vessel—there'd be no stiffening without it, and the first good breeze she'd capsize, and then where'd you be? Now, on top of those two gallons—it was two o'clock in the morning, I mind, when I started to mix it—whiskey, brandy, and sherry—no, I can't tell what parts of each—for that's the secret of it. A fellow was dory-mate with me once—a Frenchman from Bordeaux—told me and said never to tell, and I gave my oath—down in St. Peer harbor in Miquelon it was—and afterwards he was lost on the Heptagon—and of course, never being released from the oath, I can't tell. Well, there was the rum, the whiskey, the brandy, and the sherry—and on top o' that went one can of canned pine-apple—canned pine is better than the pine-apple right out of its jacket. Why? Well, that's part of the secret. Then a dozen squeezed lemons and oranges. Then some maraschino. I'd got it off an Italian salt bark skipper in the harbor once. On top o' that I put one quart of green tea—boiled it myself—it was three in the morning then, I mind—and I sampled a cup of it. Wait now—wait. Just ease your sheets and let me tell it. Here's the best part of it. I takes that crock with the fourteen quarts of good stuff in it and lowers it to the bottom of the old well

out in the yard with a lot of cold round little stones above and below and more little stones packed all around and then I lowers down two good-sized rocks on top o' that—and nails boards over the well—that's why nobody could get into that well all this summer. Well, that was the morning after the last Fourth of July—I mind the sun was coming up over the rocks of Cape Ann when I was done. And that was July, and now the last of September—three months ago. A while ago in the dark and a howling gale—you all see me come in with it, didn't you? Yes, if you go out quick, you c'n see the well just where I left it—I goes out and digs it up—and here it is—and now it's here, we'll all have a little touch in honor of to-morrow, for it's a great day when the wind blows fifty or sixty miles an hour so that fishermen can have good weather for a race."

And they all had a little touch. Clancy sat on the table with the crock between his feet and bailed it out while they all agreed it was the smoothest stuff that ever slid down their throats. There was not a man in the gang who was not sure he could put away a barrel of it.

"Put away a barrel of it?" whispered Clancy—"yes. Let's get out of here, Joe. In an hour they'll be going into the air like firecrackers."

XXVIII

IN THE ARKELL KITCHEN

WE left Clancy's boarding house and went over to old Mrs. Arkell's place, where most of the skippers who were going to race next day had gathered. Clancy at once started in to mix milk-punches. And he sang his latest favorite, with the gang supping his mixture between the stanzas:

"Oh, hove flat down on Quero Banks
Was the Bounding Billow, Captain Hanks,
And the way she was asettlin' was an awful sight to see"—

Then Wesley Marrs sang a song and after him Patsie Oddie followed with a roarer.

The punch-mixing, singing and story-telling went on and in the middle of it Tom O'Donnell came driving in. He was like a whiff of a no'theaster out to sea. "Whoo!" he said. "Hulloh, Wesley-boy — and Patsie Oddie — and Tommie Ohlsen—and, by my soul, Tommie Clancy again. Lord, what a night to come beating down from Boston! What's that, Wesley?—did the Colleen outfoot the cutter down the Cape shore way? In-

deed and she did, and could do it over again in the same breeze to half their logy old battleships. Into Boston I was Monday morning, and the fish out of her the same morning. Tuesday I took her across to Cape Cod, tuning her up, and into Provincetown that night. Next day it was blowing pretty hard. A fine day for a run across the Bay, I thinks, and waits for maybe a Boston vessel, one of the T Wharf fleet. For I'll go to Boston, I thinks, to put the Colleen on the railway to-day, because maybe in Gloucester I may have to wait—or may get no chance at all—with half a dozen or more that will be waiting to be scrubbed for the race. And who comes along then but Tom Lowrie. 'Waiting for me?' he asks, and I tells him I was hoping it would be the new Whalen vessel. 'Here's one that's as good as any Whalen vessel,' he says—'as good as anything out of Boston—or Gloucester,' he says. So across the Bay we had it out. And, gentlemen, I'm telling you the Colleen sailed—all the wind she wanted. She came along, and Lowrie—by the looks of things then—he's sailing yet. Well, I never did like that forem'st that was in the Colleen, and so, thinks I, here's a chance to test it—and why not, with the race coming on? So I jibed her over off Minot's just—and sure enough it cracked about ten feet below the mast-head."

"You were satisfied then, Tom?"

"Sure and I was. And better before the race than in the race. And next day—that's to-day—we spent putting in a new stick. I had to take what I could get to save time, and I don't think it's what it ought to be and maybe it won't last ... h to-morrow. But, anyway, you want to ... eye out for the Colleen to-morrow, for I'm ... you I never see her sail like she did yester- ... coming across the Bay. Ask Tom Lowrie ... time you see him. Well, to-night I had to beat down here to be sure and be here in time, and so out we put—and here I am. Blowing? Indeed and it is. And thick, is it? Standing on her knight-heads and looking aft you c'd no more than make out her side-lights. We came along, and Boston inner and outer harbor crowded with vessels, steamers and sail, waiting for it to moderate so they c'd put out. A blessed wonder it was we didn't sink somebody—or ourselves. Outside we went along by smell, I think, for only every once in awhile could we see a light. One time we almost ran into something—a fisherman it must have been, for I s'pose only a fisherman would be going in on a night like this—out of a squall of snow and blackness she came—man alive! but, whoever she was, she was coming a great clip. Winged out and we didn't see her till the end of

her bowsprit caught the end of our mainboom—hauled in we were to two blocks—and over we went on the other tack—yes, sir, over on the other tack. Thinks I, ' 'Tis a new way to jibe a vessel over.' And the end of her foreboom all but swept me from beside the wheel and over the rail as she went by—she was that close. And I sings to her, 'Won't you leave us your name so I can [illegible] you next time we meet?' but Lord, not a word of him. He kept on to Boston, I suppose, and kept on to Gloucester, and here I am."

"And the Colleen, Tom—she's all right?"

"Right, man? Watch her to-morrow. Barring that forem'st being too light—but whoever looked for a breeze like this?—two days and three nights now and blowing harder all the time. But never mind, she'll make great going of it to-morrow. Divil take it, but we'll all make great going of it. Tommie, dear, what's in the bowl? Milk? Man, but don't be telling me things like that—and the one thing the doctors warn me against is heart-trouble. Ah, milk-punch—that's better, man. A wee droppeen. Look at it—the color of the tip of a comber in twelve fathom of water and a cross-tide. Well, here's to every mother's son of us that's going to race to-morrow. May ye all win if the Colleen don't—all but you, Sam Hollis. But where's he gone—into the other room? Well, if

he was here 'twould be the same. He's got a vessel that can sail. Let him sail her to-morrow and win, if it's in her—or in him. But a thousand dollars—and outside my house and vessel, Lord knows, it's all the money I've got in the world—beyond my house and vessel—a thousand dollars the Colleen beats the Withrow. Hello, there—what d'y'say, Sam Hollis—the Colleen and the Withrow—a thousand dollars, boat for boat. But where the divil is he? Gone? Are you sure? Gone! But a queer time to leave a party—just when it's getting to be real sociable."

"Never mind the betting now, Tom," spoke up Wesley Marrs. "Let the owners have that to themselves. And according to accounts some of them are having it. Fred Withrow and old Duncan are ready to go broke over the race to-morrow. Whichever loses, he'll remember this race, I'm thinking. Here's hoping it won't be Duncan. So to the devil with the betting, Tom. Some of us have bet all we could afford—some of us more than we could afford, I callate. Let's have a song instead, Tom."

"Anything to please you, Wesley," and O'Donnell began to sing. He started off first with his

"Oh, seiners all and trawlers all,"

but Alec McNeill and Patsie Oddie interrupted.

"Oh, give us the other one, Tom—the Newf'undland and Cape Shore Men."

"Ha!" laughed O'Donnell, "it's the mention of your own you want—you and Patsie there. Well, it's all one to me. Any man from any place, so long as he's a fair man and a brave man, and Lord knows ye're both that. Well, here's to you both—a wee drop just, Tommie—easy—easy," and he began:

"Oh, Newf'undland and Cape Shore men, and men of Gloucester town,
With ye I've trawled o'er many banks and sailed the compass roun';
I've ate with ye, and bunked with ye, and watched with ye all three,
And better shipmates than ye were I never hope to see.
I've seen ye in the wild typhoon beneath a Southern sky,
I've seen ye when the Northern gales drove seas to masthead high,
But summer breeze or winter blow, from Hatt'ras to Cape Race,
I've yet to see ye with the sign of fear upon your face.

Oh, swingin' cross the Bay
Go eighty sail of seiners,
And every blessed one of them adriving to her rail!

There's a gale upon the waters and there's foam upon the sea,
And looking out the window is a dark-eyed girl for me,
And driving her for Gloucester, maybe we don't know
What the little ones are thinking when the mother looks out so.

The Seiners

Oh, the children in the cradle and the wife's eyes out to sea,
The husband at the helm and looking westerly—
When you get to thinking that way, don't it make your heart's blood foam?
Be sure it does—so here's a health to those we love at home.

West half no'the and drive her, we're abreast now of Cape Sable,
It's an everlasting hurricane, but here's the craft that's able—
When you get to thinking that way, don't it make your heart's blood foam?
Be sure it does—so here's a health to those we love at home.

Oh, the roar of shoaling waters and the awful, awful sea,
Busted shrouds and parting cables, and the white death on our lee;
Oh, the black, black night on Georges when eight score men were lost—
Were ye there, ye men of Gloucester? Aye, ye were—and tossed
Like chips upon the water were your little craft that night,
Driving, swearing, calling out, but ne'er a call of fright.
So knowing ye for what ye are, ye masters of the sea,
Here's to ye, Gloucester fishermen, a health to ye from me.

And here's to it that once again
We'll trawl and seine and race again;
Here's to us that's living and to them that's gone before;
And when to us the Lord says, 'Come!'
We'll bow our heads, 'His will be done,'
And all together let us go beneath the ocean's roar."

I never again expect to hear a sea song sung as

Tom O'Donnell sang it then, his beard still wet with the spray and his eyes glowing like coal-fire. And the voice of him! He must have been heard in half of Gloucester that night. He made the table quiver. And when they all rose with glasses raised and sang the last lines again:

"And here's to it that once again
We'll trawl and seine and race again;
Here's to us that's living and to them that's gone before;
And when to us the Lord says, 'Come!'
We'll bow our heads, 'His will be done,'
And all together we shall go beneath the ocean's roar——"

any stranger hearing and seeing might have understood why it was that their crews were ready to follow these men to death.

"The like of you, Tom O'Donnell, never sailed the sea," said Patsie Oddie when they had got the last ro-o-ar—"even the young ladies come in off the street to hear you better."

He meant Minnie Arkell, who was standing in the doorway with her eyes fixed on O'Donnell, who had got up to go home, but with Wesley trying to hold him back. He was to the door when Minnie Arkell stopped him. She said she had heard him singing over to her house and couldn't keep away, and then, with a smile and a look into

his eyes, she asked O'Donnell what was his hurry —and didn't he remember her?

In her suit of yachting blue, with glowing face and tumbled hair, she was a picture. "Look at her," nudged Clancy—"isn't she a corker? But she's wasting time on Tom O'Donnell."

"What's your hurry, Tom?" called Wesley. "Another song."

"No, no, it's the little woman on the hill. She knew I was to come down to-night and not a wink of sleep will she get till I'm home. And she knows there'll be bad work to-morrow maybe and she'd like to see me a little before I go, and I'd like to see her, too."

"She's a lucky woman, Captain O'Donnell, and you must think a lot of her?" Minnie Arkell had caught his eye once more.

"I don't know that she's so awfully lucky with me on her hands," laughed O'Donnell, "but I do think a lot of her, child."

"Child? to me? But you don't remember me, Captain?"

"Indeed, and I do, and well remember you. And it's the beautiful woman you've grown to be. But you always were a lovely child. It's often my wife spoke of you and wondered how you were. She's heard me speak of your father a hundred times, I know. A brave man your father, girl.

And she'll be glad to see you any time, little girl—or the daughter of any fisherman lost at sea. If ever you have a blue day, go to her, for 'tis she has the heart—and, God bless her, an extra weakness for orphans. Her own children some day—there's no telling. But good-night to you, dear"—he patted her head—"good-night all. Wesley, Tommie, Patsie—all of ye, good-night. In the morning we'll have it out." Out the door he went, and I fancied there was almost a blush on Minnie Arkell's face.

Tom O'Donnell was the kind of a man a fellow would like to have for a father.

XXIX

MAURICE BLAKE COMES HOME

FROM Mrs. Arkell's we walked back to Clancy's boarding house. Clancy wanted to see how they made out with the punch. We found several of them up in the wind, and so no great danger of them. But two or three of them, Dave Campbell particularly, were running wild. "Boomed out and driving," said Clancy, and began to remonstrate with Dave on the evils of intemperance. He went on quite awhile, but Dave showed no signs of remorse. "Wait and I'll fix him," said Clancy, and obeying a motioning with his head two or three of the sober ones followed him out.

He led the way to the wood-shed next door where there was a goat, and the goat we carried up three flights of stairs to Campbell's room. He was a big, able goat, and we had quite a time to get him up stairs. At last we got him tied to the post of Campbell's bed. Then we went down stairs to the kitchen and Clancy persuaded Campbell to go up stairs to bed, which after awhile he did. It was not yet morning and there was no light in the bed-

room. We took our position on the landing outside where we could hear everything that went on in Campbell's room, which was just at the head of the stairs.

Dave went in and we could hear him falling over something in the dark. "What's it?" we could hear him, and acting as if he was feeling around. Taking off our shoes we crawled nearer. We could barely make out his shadow in the dark, but we could easily hear him talking to himself. "What's it? Eh, what?" He must have been feeling the horns then, and the goat must have butted him. Again, and once more, for out the door and down the stairs went Dave. We ran in and cut the goat loose and down he went after Dave. The whole three flights they raced.

"He's got me at last," hollered Dave, bolting into the kitchen, slamming the door behind him and bracing himself against it.

We took the goat and put him back in the woodshed and came back to the kitchen by way of the window. Dave, who was still braced against the door, did not know but what we had been in the kitchen all the time, and that gave Clancy a fine chance to take up his lecture on intemperance just where he had left it off,—at the very beginning. "Intemperance, Dave, is an awful thing. You'll have to be doing something for it soon, I think.

Yes, when the devil himself gives you a call it's time to do something. You'd better come with me and take the pledge. Come up now to Father Haley."

"I'm a Pres—a Pres—a Pres—by—ter—ian, Tommie."

"Well, come with me to your church then—any church at all. What's the odds, so long's you reform. Here, we'll do it right here now. Come, hold up your hand," and then and there Clancy was about to get Dave to promise not to look a glass of liquor or punch in the face for a year again, when who comes bouncing in but Eddie Parsons.

"Hurroo!" said Clancy, forgetting Dave and grabbing Eddie by the shoulder, "and the Duncan's home?"

"She is," said Eddie, "and four hundred and fifty barrels of mackerel coming out of her hold. A dozen lumpers getting 'em out from both holds and two at a lick they're coming onto Duncan's Dock. And what d'y'think, Tommie——"

"But what kept you so long, man? We've all been getting heart disease waiting for you."

"I know. We ought to've been in yesterday mornin', or in the afternoon at the latest, for we swung her off Tuesday night midnight—plenty of time with a fair wind. But on Wednesday afternoon, coming like a race-horse—wung out—we sighted a dory and two men in it signalizing.

Astray they were, and we took 'em aboard, and all that night we stood by. And warn't it chafing? Oh, no! Daylight came thick and we waited for it to clear, keeping the horn goin'. It lifted and we got another dory, but it was late afternoon then. Then their vessel came along with all the others accounted for, and we turned over our two and went on our way. And maybe she didn't come! Oh, no! Blowing? A living gale all the time, but the skipper kept her going. You'd hardly b'lieve if I told you where we was yesterday afternoon and we here now. A no'the-easter and a howler all the way. At four o'clock we passed in by the bell-buoy. Man, such a blow! Are we in the race, you say? Are we! And oh, the skipper says for you and Joe to be down after breakfast. We all knew you'd get home and be all right with Tom O'Donnell. So be down after breakfast—the skipper will be looking for you both. But say, let me tell you. What d'y'think? Coming into the harbor a while ago who d'y' s'pose was out in the stream with a lighter alongside his vessel? Who but Sam Hollis and the Withrow. Yes, and the gang putting ballast back in her."

"No?"

"Yes. And some one of them sees us going by in the dark. And we did go by, too! 'Lord!' says somebody—'twas Withrow himself—'but if that don't look like the ghost of Maurice Blake's ves-

sel!' 'Yes,' hollers back the skipper—and they must've been some surprised to hear him—'and the ghost'll be with you to-morrow in the race. Yes,' the skipper says, 'and we're all ready for it. Four weeks since we've been on the ways and maybe a scrubbing wouldn't hurt her, but if it keeps ablowin' who'll mind that? Not the Johnnie.' Oh, Tommie, if you'd seen her comin' across the Bay of Fundy yesterday afternoon and last night. Did she come?—did she come? Lord—O Lord——"

"And so that's Withrow—got his vessel tuned up like a fiddle and now he's putting extra ballast in her. Blast him and Hollis for schemers!" said Clancy. "And that's how it comes they're so ready to bet—stiffenin' her so stiff for to-morrow that they know something'll happen to the others first. But the Johnnie's a bit stiff, too—and there's no ballast out of her. And, as the skipper says, maybe we ain't been on the ways for a few weeks now, but Lord, the Johnnie ought to be able to drag a few little blades of sea-grass on her hull in this breeze. And so we're in the race, heh? Dave, I can't stop to give you the pledge now—

> Oh, the Johnnie Duncan fast and able,
> Good-by, dear, good-by, my Mabel."

And Clancy was the joyful man as he awoke the echoes in the gray of that stormy morning.

XXX

THE MORNING OF THE RACE

I DON'T think that the people of Gloucester will ever forget the morning of that race, which, they will still tell you, was the only race ever sailed. Wind was what the fishermen wanted, and they got it—wind, and sea with it. The admiral of the White Squadron, then at anchor at Rockport Harbor, just around the Cape, stood on the bridge of his flagship that morning and looked out to sea. Somebody told him that the fishermen were going to race that day. He took another look. "Race to-day? Pooh! they'll do well to stay hove-to to-day." Of course, that ought to have settled it, the admiral having said it.

It blew that day. Leaving home I had time for a bite to eat and a wash-up. I turned the corner and picked up Clancy, with Maurice Blake, Tom O'Donnell and Wesley Marrs just ahead. We ran into Mr. Edkins, a nice old gentleman, who had been made secretary of the race committee. What he didn't know about fishing would be the making of a "killer," but, of course, he wasn't picked out

for that—he'd never fished a day in his life—but because of his knowledge of the rules of yacht racing. Having had long experience in managing yachting regattas, he knew all about time allowances and sail measurements—though there were to be no allowances of any kind here. It was to be boat for boat in this race; every vessel for herself. So he was thought to be a good man to have to look after the stake and judges' boats. It was Gloucester's Anniversary celebration, with a lot of strangers in town—the Governor and a whole holdful of national characters—and in deference to them the race was to be managed so that spectators might have a chance to see it.

Mr. Edkins came along in his official regalia—tall hat, frock coat, umbrella, gloves, and a pink in his button-hole.

"Is it true, Captain O'Donnell, that the race is going to be held to-day?"

O'Donnell looked at him as though he didn't understand. "To-day? to-day?—Good Lord, are we all on the wrong tack? And sure isn't this the day?"

"Oh, yes—oh, yes, Captain O'Donnell, this is the day appointed. And that is the trouble. Surely you are not going to race to-day?"

"We're not going to—" broke in Wesley Marrs, "and why aren't we going to race to-day? What

in the name of all that's good have we been doing with our vessels up on the railway the last week or two? What d'y'think we took the ballast out of our vessels for? What d'y'think I had that everlasting new balloon made for last trip in, what for that big mains'l that Tom here had bent on the Colleen yesterday, and for what did Maurice drive the Johnnie Duncan home only last night? What in——"

"Wait, Captain, wait. What I mean is, do you know how it is outside? They've telegraphed me that up in Boston Harbor there won't be a steamer leave the harbor to-day—it's as stormy as that. There are two big ocean liners—and we've got word that they won't leave—won't dare to leave —not a steamer of any kind will leave Boston Harbor to-day. And outside a heavy sea running—with the wind fifty-four miles an hour, the weather bureau says. Fifty-four miles an hour. That's not street corner talk—it's official. And——"

"Divil take it, does being official make it blow any harder?" asked O'Donnell.

"And I know the way you fishermen will try to carry on. I know, I know—don't tell me you're careful. I tell you, Captain O'Donnell, and you, Captain Marrs, I tell you all—that if you persist in racing to-day I wash my hands of the whole affair—completely wash my——"

"Well, 'tis a fine wash day, too. Come, Wesley —come, Maurice, we'll have to be getting on."

They left Mr. Edkins standing there. A little farther on they overtook the manager of the insurance company, which had policies on most of the fishing vessels. He was just about to enter his office when O'Donnell spied him. "Hullo, there's the man I want to see—" and hailed, "Just heave to a minute, Mr. Brooks, if you please. Now look here, you know we've took a few pigs of iron out our vessels, and you know it looks like a bit of weather outside. Now, what I want to know is if I capsize the Colleen Bawn to-day—if I don't come home with her—does my wife get the insurance? That's what I want to know—does my wife get the insurance?"

Mr. Brooks looked at O'Donnell, rubbed his chin and scratched his head, then looked at O'Donnell again. "Why, I suppose it all comes under the usual risk of fishing vessels. I suppose so—but—h-m—it will be pretty risky, won't it? But let me see—wait a moment now—there's the President inside, and Mr. Emerson, too—he's a director."

He went inside, and we could see that they were talking it over. Pretty soon they all came out with the President of the company in front. "Good-morning, Captain O'Donnell — Captain Marrs, good-morning. How do you do, Mau-

rice? Captain O'Donnell, take it from me as official, your insurance on the Colleen Bawn is safe. For the honor and glory of old Gloucester go ahead and sink her."

"And the Lucy Foster?" asked Wesley.

"And the Lucy Foster, Captain Marrs."

"Of course the Johnnie Duncan, speaking for the owners?" asked Maurice.

"For every vessel that we insure that leaves the harbor to race to-day."

"Hurroo!" said O'Donnell. "Don't tell me, Wesley, I'm no—what's it?—dip-lo-mat. Yes, dip-lo-mat, by the Lord!"

But it certainly was a desperate morning for a race. The streets seemed to be full of men ready to go out. There were to be only nine vessels in the race, but another half dozen vessels were going over to see it, and that meant more than three or four hundred able fishermen going out. The men that were going to stay ashore would go up to those that were going out and say, "Well, good-by, old man. If you don't come back, why, you know your grave'll be kept green." And the men going out would grin and say, "That's all right, boy, but if she goes, she'll go with every rag on her," in a half-joking way, too, but it was the belief that morning that there might be a whole lot of truth in that kind of joking.

Before we reached the dock we knew that the whole town had learned pretty much that half a dozen of the skippers had promised each other in Mrs. Arkell's kitchen the night before, "No sail comes off except what's blown off," and there promised to be some blown off. Men who had only just heard their skippers speak of that were bragging of it in the streets. "Why," said one of O'Donnell's crew as we were coming down the dock, "if any crawly-spined crawfish loses his nerve and jumps to our halyards, thinkin' the Colleen's going to capsize—why, he'll get fooled—and why? Because our halyards are all housed aloft —by the skipper's orders."

That sounded strong, but it was true. When we reached the end of our dock we looked for ourselves, and there it was. The Colleen's crew had hoisted their mains'l already and there she lay swayed up and all ready, and men aloft were even then putting the seizing on. Tom O'Donnell himself was pointing it out to Sam Hollis with a good deal of glee, thinking, I suppose, to worry Hollis, who, to uphold his reputation, would have to do the same and take the chances that went with it. By this time everybody knew that Hollis had put his ballast back during the night. One of Wesley Marrs's men jumped onto the Withrow and below and had a look for himself. He couldn't get down

by way of the hatches—they were battened down —but he dropped into the forec's'le and, before anybody knew what he was up to, he had slipped through the forehold and into the mainhold and there he saw where they had hurriedly put back the flooring, and he also saw extra barrels of sand tiered low for further stiffening of the Withrow. He was discovered before he got on deck and nearly beaten to a jelly before he got up on the wharf again. It ended in a fine little riot with some of our gang and O'Donnell's mixing in. Clancy came down the back-stay like a man falling from the masthead, so as to be into it before it was over. He was almost too late—but not quite. Only old Mr. Duncan coming along with half a dozen other dignified owners stopped it. But there was time for Clancy to speak his mind out to Sam Hollis. And that gave Hollis a chance to say, "Well, talk away, Tommie Clancy, but this is the day I make the Johnnie Duncan take in sail." And Clancy answered him, "That so! Well, no matter what happens, put this down, Maurice Blake hangs to his canvas longer than Sam Hollis to-day—hangs to it or goes over with it or the spars come out of the Johnnie Duncan."

After the talking was over we thought Hollis would be shamed into sending a man aloft to mouse his halyards too. But not for Hollis. That was

a little too much for him. Clancy and three or four others finished attending to our own halyards and overhauling the gear aloft. Our mains'l was already hoisted and the other three lowers with stops loosed were all ready to hoist too. The mains'l had been left standing just as it was when the Johnnie Duncan came in that morning. It was flat as a board, and I remember how grieved we were when we had to lower it again because the tug that came to give us a kick out from the dock could not turn us around with it up—it was blowing so. The tug captain said he might manage to turn it against the sun, but that would be bad luck of course, and he knew the crew wouldn't stand for it, especially with a race like this on hand. It had to be with the sun; and so we had to lower it again, and when the vessel was turned around, hoist it again, not forgetting to lash the halyards aloft again too. But after we'd got it swayed up it didn't set near so well as before—too baggy to our way of thinking.

XXXI

THE START OF THE RACE

WE got away at last and beat out the harbor with the Lucy Foster, the Colleen Bawn, the Withrow, the Nannie O, and four others. For other company going out there was a big steam-yacht with Minnie Arkell and her friends aboard, which did not get out of the harbor. Out by the Point they shipped a sea and put back, with Minnie Arkell waving her handkerchief and singing out—"Don't take in any sail, Maurice," as they turned back. There was also the Eastern Point, a high-sided stubby steamer, at that time running regularly to Boston; and there was the New Rochelle, a weak-looking excursioner that might have done for Long Island Sound, where somebody said she'd just come from, but which didn't seem to fit in here. Her passengers were mostly fishermen—crews of vessels not in the race. There was also a big powerful iron sea-tug, the Tocsin, that promised to make better weather of it than any of the others.

Billie Simms was one of the men who were not

going in the race but intended to see some of it. He was in the Henry Clay Parker, a fine-looking vessel that was not so very fast, but had the reputation of being wonderfully stiff. Coming out past Eastern Point lighthouse, where he could begin to get a look at things, Billie hollered out that he was sorry he hadn't entered. "Looks to me like the vessel that'll stay right side up the longest ought to win this race, and that's the Henry C." He hauled her across our stern while he was yelling and I remember she took one roll down to her sheer poles when passing on, and Maurice sang out, "Look out, Billie, or you'll capsize her."

"Capsize this one? Lord, Maurice, I've tried it a dozen times and I'm damned if I could," and he went rolling on like nothing I ever saw, unless it was the rest of us who were then manœuvring for the start. We passed the Parker again before we got to the line, and old Peter Hines, who was hanging to her main-rigging, had to yell us his good wishes. "Drive her, Maurice-boy, and whatever you do don't let the man that took your vessel from you beat you home," meaning Sam Hollis of course. Maurice waved his hand, but said nothing. He was looking serious enough, however.

Tommie Clancy was the boy who wasn't worrying particularly. He saluted Peter as if he were

going out on a holiday excursion. "Ain't she a dog, Peter? Watch her."

"That's what she is—and drive her, Tommie—drive her."

"Oh, we'll drive her, Peter," called back Tommie, and began:

> "Oh, I love old Ocean's smile,
> I love old Ocean's frowning—
> I love old Ocean all the while,
> My prayer's for death by drowning."

"Let you alone, Tommie, and you'll get your prayer some day," was Peter's last hail as we straightened out for the swoop across the line.

Clancy was to the wheel then with the skipper. Both were lashed and we had life-lines around deck. To the wheel of every vessel in the fleet were two men lashed, and they all had life-lines around deck.

In crossing the line there was no attempt at jockeying such as one often sees in yacht racing. There was no disposition on the part of any skipper to do anything that would set anybody else back. Of course, everybody wanted to be in a good berth and to cross between the guns; but the idea was to give the vessels such a try out as they would get out to sea—as if they were making a passage in a breeze. The course—forty-two miles or so—was very short

for a fisherman, for one great thing in a fisherman is her power to stand a long drag. Day and night in and day and night out and driving all the time is the way a fisherman wants it. Any sort of racing machine could be built to stand a little hard going for a while. But that wouldn't be living through a long hard winter's gale on the Banks—one of those blows where wind and sea—and in shoal water at that—have a chance to do their worst. Fishermen are built for that sort of work and on their sea-worthiness depends not only the fortunes of owners but the lives of men—of real men—and the happiness and comfort of wives and children ashore. And so the idea in everybody's mind that day was to make this test as nearly fair as could be and see who had the fastest and most weatherly boat in the fleet. There were men to the wheel that day who could handle big fishermen as if they were cat-boats, who would have dared and did, later, dare to sail their vessels as close to a mark in this sea as men sail a twenty-foot knockabout in the smoothest of waters inshore—only with the fishermen a slip-up meant the loss of a vessel, maybe other vessels too, and twenty-five or fifty lives perhaps.

And so the skill of these men was not used to give anybody the worst of it. A fair start and give everybody his chance was the idea. Thus

Tommie Ohlsen could have forced the Withrow outside the starting boat and compelled her to come about and maybe lose a few minutes, but he did not. He held up and let her squeeze through. O'Donnell in his turn could have crowded Ohlsen when he let up on the Withrow, but he did not. He, too, held up in turn and let Ohlsen have his swing going across.

Across we went, one after the other. West-sou'west was the course to a stake-boat, which we were told would be found off Egg Rock, fourteen miles away. We had only the compass to go by, for at the start it was rain and drizzle, as well as wind and a big sea, and you couldn't see a mile ahead. On the way we shot by the New Rochelle, which had started ahead with the intention of waiting for the fleet at the first stake-boat. Now she was headed back, wabbing awfully. From Billie Simms, who went over part of the course in the Henry Clay Parker ahead of the fleet, we got word of the trouble as we went by. The New Rochelle was beginning to leak. "You c'n spit between her deck-planks and into her hold—she's that loose," hollered Billie. I don't think the fishermen aboard of her minded much so long as she stayed afloat, but her captain, a properly licensed man, did, I expect, and so she put back with some of them growling, I heard afterward, "and after

paying their little old three dollars to see only the start of the race." Her captain reported, when he got in, that he didn't see anything outside but a lot of foolish fishermen trying to drown themselves.

The first leg was before the wind and the Lucy Foster and the Colleen Bawn went it like bullets. I don't expect ever again to see vessels run faster than they did that morning. On some of those tough passages from the Banks fishing vessels may at times have gone faster than either of these did that morning. It is likely, for where a lot of able vessels are all the time trying to make fast passages—skippers who are not afraid to carry sail and vessels that can stand the dragging—and in all kinds of chances—there must in the course of years of trying be some hours when they do get over an everlasting lot of water. But there are no means of checking up. Half the time the men do not haul the log for half a day or more. Some of the reports of speed of fishermen at odd times have been beyond all records, and so people who do not know say they must be impossible. But here was a measured course and properly anchored stake-boats—and the Lucy and the Colleen did that first leg of almost fourteen sea-miles in fifty minutes, which is better than a 16½ knot clip, and that means over nineteen land miles an hour. I

think anybody would call that pretty fast going. And, as some of them said afterward, "Lord in Heaven! suppose we'd had smooth water!" But I don't think that the sea checked them so very much—not as much as one might think, for they were driving these vessels.

XXXII

O'DONNELL CARRIES AWAY BOTH MASTS

WE were next to the last vessel across the starting line. The Nannie O — we couldn't see them all—about held the Lucy Foster and the Colleen Bawn level. The Withrow showed herself to be a wonderful vessel off the wind, too. Wesley Marrs was around the stake-boat first. In the fog and drizzle the leaders did not find the stake-boat at once. Wesley happening to be nearest to it when they did see it, got the benefit and was first around. We were close up, almost near enough to board the Withrow's quarter rounding. I am not sure that the skipper and Clancy, who were to the wheel, did not try to give Hollis a poke with the end of our long bowsprit; but if they did, the Johnnie was not quite fast enough for that. The Withrow beat us around. Looking back we could see the others coming like wild horses. Every one of them, except one that carried away something and hauled up and out of it, was diving into it to the foremast with every leap the same as we had been. On that first leg nobody could stand anywhere

for'ard of the fore-hatch or he would have been swept overboard.

Leaving Egg Rock and going for Minot's Ledge, the skipper left the wheel and George Nelson took his place beside Clancy. It was drizzling then, every now and then that settling down so that we couldn't see three lengths ahead. At such times we simply hoped that nobody ahead would carry away anything or in any way become disabled in the road.

Well clear of the stake-boat, however, it lifted and we could see what we were doing. The Lucy Foster was still ahead with O'Donnell and Ohlsen and Hollis almost abreast—no more than a few lengths between. Practically they were all about just as they started. We were next. It was a broad reach to Minot's Ledge and hard going for all hands. It must be remembered that we all had everything on, even to balloon and staysails, and our halyards were lashed aloft. The men to the mast-head, who were up there to shift tacks, were having a sweet time of it hanging on, even lashed though they were.

Everybody was pretty well strung up at this time. The skipper, a line about his elbow, was hooked up to the main-rigging—the weather side, of course—and it was up to a man's waist and boiling white on the lee side. The crew were snug

up under the weather rail and hanging on—no mistake either about the way they were hanging on. Every once in awhile one of us would poke his head up to see what they were doing to windward of us. Mr. Duncan, who had come aboard just before we left the dock, was trying to sit on the weather bitt near the wheel-box. He had a line around his waist, too. He had bet a lot of money with Withrow on the race, but I don't think that his money was worrying him half so much as some other things then.

So far as we could see at this time we were making as good weather as any of them. And our best chance—the beat home—was yet to come. The Johnnie had the stiffness for that. Had the Johnnie reached Gloucester from the Cape Shore earlier she, too, would have been lightened up and made less stiff. To be sure she would have had her bottom scrubbed and we would have had her up to racing pitch, with every bit of sail just so and her trim gauged to a hair's depth, but that did not matter so very much now. The Johnnie was in shape for a hard drag like this, and for that we had to thank the tricky Sam Hollis. We began to see that after all it was a bit of good luck our vessel not being home in time to tune up the same as the rest of the fleet.

It was along about here—half-way on the reach

to Minot's—that Tommie Ohlsen broke his main-gaff. It was the fault of the Eastern Point, the Boston steamer. She had gone ahead of the fleet, taking almost a straight course for Minot's Ledge. Reaching across from Half-Way Rock to Minot's the fleet began to overhaul her. She, making bad weather of it along here, started to turn around. But, rolling to her top-rail, it was too much for them, and her captain kept her straight on for Boston. That was all right, but her action threw Ohlsen off. She was right in the Nannie O's way, and to save the steamer and themselves from a collision and certain loss of life, Ohlsen had to jibe the Nannie O, and so suddenly that the Nannie O's gaff broke under the strain. And that lost Ohlsen his chance for the race. It was too bad, for with Ohlsen, Marrs, and O'Donnell, each in his own vessel in a breeze, you could put the names in a hat and shake them up. When we went by the Nannie O her crew were getting the trysail out of the hold, and they finished the race with that, and made good going of it, as we saw afterward. Indeed, a trysail that day would have been sail enough for almost any men but these.

Before we reached Minot's there was some sail went into the air. One after the other went the balloons—on the Foster, the Colleen, the Withrow and at last on us. I don't know whether

they had any trouble on the others—being too busy with our own to watch—but we came near to losing men with ours. It got caught under our keel, and we started to try to haul it in—the skipper having an economical notion of saving the owner the expense of a new sail, I suppose. But Mr. Duncan, seeing what he was at, sang out: "Let the sail go to the devil, Captain—I'll pay for the new one myself." Even at that we had to crawl out on the bowsprit—six or eight of us—with sharp knives, and cut it away, and we were glad to get back again. The Johnnie never slackened. It was desperate work.

Rounding Minot's, Tom O'Donnell gave an exhibition of desperate seamanship. He had made up his mind, it seems, that he was due to pass Wesley Marrs along here. But first he had to get by the Withrow. Off Minot's was the turning buoy, with just room, as it was considered, for one vessel at a time to pass safely in that sea.

O'Donnell figured that the tide being high there was easily room for two, and then breasted up to the Withrow, outside of her and with the rocks just under his quarter. Hollis, seeing him come, made a motion as if to force him on the rocks, but O'Donnell, standing to his own wheel, called out—"You do, Sam Hollis, and we'll both go." There certainly would have been a collision, with both

vessels and both crews—fifty men—very likely lost, but Hollis weakened and kept off. That kind of work was too strong for him. He had so little room that his main-boom hit the can-buoy as he swept by.

Once well around O'Donnell, in great humor, and courting death, worked by Hollis and then, making ready to tack and pass Wesley's bow, let the Colleen have her swing, but with all that sail on and in that breeze, there could be only one outcome. And yet he might have got away with it but for his new foremast, which, as he had feared, had not the strength it should have had. He let her go, never stopped to haul in his sheets—he had not time to if he was to cross Wesley's bow. So he swung her and the full force of the wind getting her laid both spars over the side—first one and then the other clean as could be.

Hollis never stopped or made a motion to help, but kept on after the Lucy Foster. We almost ran over O'Donnell, but luffed in time, and the skipper called out to O'Donnell that we'd stand by and take his men off.

O'Donnell was swearing everything blue. "Go on—go on—don't mind me. Go on, I tell you. We're all right. I'll have her under jury rig and be home for supper. Go on, Maurice—go on and beat that divil Hollis!"

Half way to Eastern Point on the way back saw us in the wake of the Withrow, which was then almost up with the Lucy Foster. It was the beat home now, with all of us looking to see the Withrow do great things, for just off the ways and with all her ballast in she was in great trim for it. Going to windward, too, was generally held to be her best point of sailing. All that Hollis had to do was to keep his nerve and drive her.

XXXIII

THE ABLE JOHNNIE DUNCAN

HOLLIS was certainly driving her now. He ought to have felt safe in doing so with the Lucy Foster to go by, for the Lucy, by reason of the ballast taken out of her, should, everything else being equal, capsize before the Withrow.

Hollis must have had that in mind, for he followed Wesley Marrs's every move. Wesley was sailing her wide. And our skipper approved of that, too. To attempt a too close course in the sea that was out in the Bay that day, with the blasts of wind that were sweeping down, would have deadened her way altogether too much—maybe hung her up. And so it was "Keep her a full whatever you do," and that, with coming about when the others did—we being afraid to split tacks—made plenty of work for us.

"Hard-a-lee" it was one after the other, and for every "Hard-a-lee" twenty of us went down into the roaring sea fore and aft and hauled in and slackened away sheets, while aloft, the fellows lashed to the foremast head shifted top and stay-

sail tacks. They were wise to lash themselves up aloft, for with every tack, she rolled down into it as if she were never coming up, and when she did come up shook herself as if she would snap her topmasts off.

Half way to Eastern Point on the beat home it seemed to occur to the skipper and to Clancy that the Johnnie Duncan stood a chance to win the race. It was Clancy, still lashed to the wheel, now with Long Steve, turned his head for just a second to Mr. Duncan and spoke the first word of it.

"Mr. Duncan, do you know, but the Johnnie's got a chance to win this race?"

"D'y'think so, Tommie—d'y'think so?"

Some of us in the crew had been thinking of that same thing some time, and we watched Mr. Duncan, who, with a life line about him, was clinging to a bitt aft, and watching things with tight lips, a drawn face and shiny eyes. We listened to hear what else he might have to say. But he didn't realize at once what it meant. His eyes and his mind were on the Lucy Foster.

"What d'y'think of the Lucy and the Withrow, Tommie?" Mr. Duncan said next.

Tommie took a fresh look at the Lucy Foster, which was certainly doing stunts. It was along this time that big Jim Murch—a tall man, but even so, he was no more than six feet four, and

the Lucy twenty-four feet beam—was swinging from the ringbolts under the windward rail and throwing his feet out trying to touch with his heels the sea that was swashing up on the Lucy's deck. And every once in a while he did touch, for the Lucy, feeling the need of her ballast, was making pretty heavy weather of it. Every time she rolled and her sheer poles went under, Jim would holler out that he'd touched again.

We could hear him over on the Johnnie at times. Mr. Duncan, who believed that nothing ever built could beat the Lucy Foster, began to worry at that, and again he spoke to Clancy. He had to holler to make himself heard.

"But what do you think of the Lucy's chances, Tommie?"

Clancy shook his head.

And getting nothing out of Clancy, Mr. Duncan called out then: "What do you think of the Lucy, you, Captain Blake?"

The skipper shook his head, too. "I'm afraid it's too much for her."

And then—one elbow was hitched in the weather rigging and a half hitch around his waist—the skipper swung around, and looking over to the Withrow, he went on:

"I don't see, Mr. Duncan, why we don't stand a pretty good chance to win out on Hollis."

"Why not—why not—if anything happens to the Lucy."

It jarred us some to think that even there, in spite of the great race the Johnnie was making of it, she was still, in the old man's eyes, only a second string to the Lucy Foster.

About then the wind seemed to come harder than ever, but Clancy at the wheel never let up on the Johnnie. He socked it to her—wide and free he sailed her. Kept her going—oh, but he kept her going. "If this one only had a clean bottom and a chance to tune her up before going out," said somebody, and we all said, "Oh, if she only had—just half a day on the railway before this race."

We were fairly buried at times on the Johnnie—on the Lucy Foster it must have been tough. And along here the staysail came off the Withrow and eased her a lot. We would all have been better off with less sail along about that time. In proof of that we could see back behind us where the Nannie O, under her trysail, was almost holding her own. But it wouldn't do to take it off. Had they not all said before putting off that morning that what sail came off that day would be blown off?—yes, sir—let it blow a hundred miles an hour. And fishermen's pride was keeping sail on us and the Foster. Hollis tried to make it look

that his staysail blew off, but we knew better—a knife to the halyards did the work.

It was after her big staysail was off and she making easier weather of it that the Withrow crossed the Lucy's bow for the first time in the race and took the lead.

We all felt for Mr. Duncan, who couldn't seem to believe his eyes. We all felt for Wesley, too, who was desperately trying to hold the wind of the Withrow—he had even rigged blocks to his jib sheets and led them to cleats clear aft to flatten his headsails yet more. And Wesley's crew hauled like demons on those jib sheets—hauled and hauled with the vessel under way all the time—hauled so hard, in fact, that with the extra purchase given them by the blocks they pulled the cleats clean out, and away went the Lucy's jib and jumbo—and there was Wesley hung up. And out of the race, for we were all too near the finish for her to win out then unless the Johnnie and the Withrow capsized entirely.

Mr. Duncan, when he saw the Lucy's crew trying to save the head-sails, couldn't contain himself.

"Cut 'em away—cut 'em to hell!" he sang out, and we all had to smile, he spoke so excitedly. But it was no use. The Lucy was out of the race, and going by her, we didn't look at Mr. Duncan nor

Wesley Marrs—we knew they were both taking it hard—but watched the Withrow.

Over on the other tack we went, first the Withrow, then the Johnnie. We were nearing the finish line, and we were pretty well worked up—the awful squalls were swooping down and burying us. We could hear Hollis's voice and see his crew go up when he warned his men at the wheel to ease up on her when the squalls hit. On our vessel the skipper never waved an arm nor opened his mouth to Clancy at the wheel. And of his own accord you may be sure that Clancy wasn't easing up. Not Tommie Clancy—no, sir—he just drove her—let her have it full—lashed her like, with his teeth and eyes flashing through the sea that was swashing over him. And the Johnnie fairly sizzled through the water.

There were several times in the race when we thought the going was as bad as could be, but now we were all sure that this was the worst of all. There was some excuse for Mr. Duncan when he called out:

"My God, Tommie, but if she makes one of those low dives again, will she ever come up?"

"I dunno," said Clancy to that. "But don't you worry, Mr. Duncan, if any vessel out of Gloucester'll come up, this one'll come up."

He was standing with the water, the clear water,

not the swash, well up to his waist then, and we could hear him:

"Oh, I love old Ocean's smile,
I love old Ocean's frowning—
I love old Ocean all the while,
My prayer's for death by drowning."

That was too much for Mr. Duncan, and, watching his chance, he dove between the house and rail, to the weather rigging, where the skipper grabbed him and made him fast beside himself. The old man took a look down the slant of the deck and took a fresh hold of the rigging.

"Captain Blake, isn't she down pretty low?"

"Maybe—maybe—Mr. Duncan, but she'll go lower yet before the sail comes off her. This is the day Sam Hollis was going to make me take in sail."

Less than a minute after that we made our rush for the line. Hollis tried to crowd us outside the stake-boat, which was rolling head to wind and sea, worse than a light-ship in a surf gale—tried to crowd us out just as an awful squall swooped down. It was the Johnnie or the Withrow then. We took it full and they didn't, and there is all there was to it. But for a minute it was either vessel's race. At the critical time Sam Hollis didn't have the nerve, and the skipper and Clancy did.

They looked at each other—the skipper and Clancy—and Clancy soaked her. Held to it cruelly—recklessly. It was too much to ask of a vessel. Down she went—buried. It was heaven or hell, as they say, for a while. I know I climbed on to her weather run, and it was from there I saw Withrow ducking her head to it—hove to, in fact, for the blast to pass.

The Johnnie weathered it. Able—able. Up she rose, a horse, and across the line we shot like a bullet, and so close to the judge's boat that we could have jumped aboard.

We all but hit the Henry Clay Parker, Billie Simms's vessel, on the other side of the line, and it was on her that old Peter of Crow's Nest, leaping into the air and cracking his heels together, called out as we drove by:

"The Johnnie Duncan wins—the able Johnnie Duncan—sailin' across the line on her side and her crew sittin' out on the keel."

XXXIV

MINNIE ARKELL ONCE MORE

WE were hardly across the line when there was a broom at our truck—a new broom that I know I, for one, never saw before. And yet I suppose every vessel that sailed in the race that day had a new broom hid away somewhere below —to be handy if needed.

But it was the Johnnie Duncan, sailing up the harbor, that carried hers to the truck. And it was Mr. Duncan who stood aft of her and took most of the cheers, and it was Clancy and Long Steve who waved their hands from the wheel-box, and it was the skipper who leaned against the weather rigging, and the rest of us who lined the weather rail and answered the foolish questions of people along the road.

Every vessel we met seemed to think we had done something great; and I suppose we had in a way—that is, skipper, crew and vessel. We had out-carried and out-sailed the best out of Gloucester in a breeze that was a breeze. We had taken the chance of being capsized or hove-down and

losing the vessel and ourselves. Mr. Duncan, I think, realized more than anybody else at the time what we had been through. "I didn't know what it really was to be," he said, "before I started. If I had, I doubt very much if I'd have started." We all said—"No, no, you'd have gone just the same, Mr. Duncan;" and we believed he would, too.

Going up the harbor somebody hinted to Clancy that he ought to go and have a mug-up for himself after his hard work—and it had been hard work. "And I'll take your place at the wheel," said that somebody, "for you must be tired, Tommie."

"And maybe I am tired, too," answered Clancy, "but if I am, I'm just thick enough not to know it. But don't fool yourself that if I stood lashed to this wheel since she crossed the starting line this morning I'm going to quit it now and let you take her up the harbor and get all the bouquets. I'll have a mug-up by and by, and it'll be a mug-up, don't you worry."

And it was a mug-up. He took the gold and silver cup given to Maurice as a skipper of the winning vessel, and with the crew in his wake headed a course for the Anchorage, where he filled it till it flowed—and didn't have to pay for filling it, either.

"It's the swellest growler that I ever expect to empty. Gold and silver—and holds six quarts

level. Just a little touch all round, and we'll fill her up again. 'Carte blanche, and charge it to me,' says Mr. Duncan."

"What kind is carte blanche, Tommie?" asked Andie Howe.

"They'll tell you behind the bar," said Clancy.

"Billie," ordered Andie, "just a little touch of carte blanche, will you, while Clancy's talking. He's the slowest man to begin that ever I see. Speeches—speeches—speeches, when your throat's full of gurry—dry, salty gurry. A little touch of that carte blanche that Mr. Duncan ordered for the crew of the Johnnie Duncan, Billie, will you?"

"Carte blanche—yes," went on Clancy, "and I callate the old fizzy stuff's the thing to do justice to this fe-lic-i-tous oc-ca-sion. Do I hear the voice of my shipmates? Aye, aye, I hear them—and in accents unmistakable. Well, here's a shoot—six quarts level—and a few pieces of ice floating around on top. My soul, but don't it look fine and rich? Have a look, everybody."

"Let's have a drink instead," hollered Parsons.

Clancy paid no attention to that. "Who was the lad in that Greek bunch in the old days that they sank up to his neck in the lake—cold sparkling water—and peaches and oranges and grapes floating on a little raft close by—but him fixed so he couldn't bend his head down to get a drink nor

lift his head to take a bite of fruit—and hot weather all the time, mind you. Lord, the thirst he raised after a while! What was his—oh, yes, Tantalus—that's the lad, Tantalus—the cold sparkling water. Man, the thirst he——"

"The thirst of Tantalus ain't a patch on the thirst I got. And this is something better than cold sparkling water. That's you all over, Tommie—joking at serious times," wailed Parsons.

"Is it as bad as that with you, Eddie? Well, let's forget Tantalus and drink instead to the able-est, handsom-est, fast-est vessel that ever weathered Eastern Point—to the Johnnie Duncan—and her skipper."

"And Mr. Duncan, Tommie—he's all right, too."

"Yes, of course, Mr. Duncan. And while we're at it, here's to the whole blessed gang of us—skipper, owner and crew—we're all corkers."

"Drive her, Tommie!" roared a dozen voices, and Tommie drove her for a good pint before he set the cup down again.

It was a great celebration altogether. Wherever one of our gang was there was an admiring crowd. Nobody but us was listened to. And the questions we had to answer! And of course we were all willing enough to talk. We must have told the story of the race over about twenty times

each. After a while, of course, some of our fellows, with all the entertaining and admiration that was handed out to them, had to put a touch or two to it. It was strong enough to tell the bare facts of that race, I thought, but one or two had to give their imaginations a chance. One man, a fisherman, one of those who had been on one of the excursion boats, and so didn't see the race at all, came along about two hours after the Duncan crew struck the Anchorage and listened to Andie Howe for a while. And going away it was he who said, "It must have been a race that. As near as I c'n make it out the Johnnie sailed most of that race keel up."

"Oh, don't go away mad," Andie called after him. "Come back and have a little touch of carte blanche—it's on the old man."

"I'll take it for him," came a voice. It was old Peter of Crow's Nest, who took his drink and asked for Clancy. Clancy was in the back part of the room, and I ran and got him. Peter led the way to the sidewalk.

"Tommie, go and get Maurice, if it ain't too late."

"What is it?"

"It's Minnie Arkell. Coming up the dock after the race she ran up and grabbed him and threw her arms about his neck. 'You're the man to sail a

race in heavy weather,' she hollers, and a hundred people looking on. And there's half a dozen of those friends of hers and they're up to her house and now making ready for a wine celebration. Go and get him before it is too late."

XXXV

CLANCY LAYS DOWN THE LAW

CLANCY started on the run and I after him. "We'll go to his boarding-house first, Joe, and if he's not there, to Minnie Arkell's."

He wasn't in his boarding-house, and we hurried out. On the sidewalk we almost ran into little Johnnie Duncan.

"Oh, Captain Clancy—or you, Joe Buckley—won't you tell me about the race? Grandpa was too busy to tell me, but went down the wharf with a lot of people to show them the Johnnie Duncan. They all left the office and told me to mind it. And my cousin Alice came in with Joe's cousin Nell. And I saw Captain Blake with some people and ran after him and I just caught up with him and they went off and left me. And then a little while ago he came back by himself and ran toward the dock and didn't even see me. And Captain Blake used to be so good to me!" Poor Johnnie was all but crying.

"Toward the dock? That's good," breathed Clancy. "Stay here, Johnnie, and we'll tell you

about the race when we get back," and led the way to Mr. Duncan's office.

We found the skipper in the outer office, standing beside the bookkeeper's desk and looking out of the window next the slip. Hearing us coming he turned and then we saw that he held in his hands an open box with a string of beautiful pearls. Noticing us gaze at the pearls in surprise, he said, "Mr. Duncan gave me these for winning the race. And I took them, thinking that somebody or other might like them."

"And don't she?" asked Clancy—it seemed to slip out of Tommie without his knowing it.

"I guess not," said Maurice. Only then did it flash on me what it all might mean.

"Did you try?" asked Clancy.

"Try! Yes, and was made a fool of. Oh, what's the use—what in hell's the use?" He stood silent a moment. "I guess not," he said then—looked out the window again, and hove the whole string out of the open window and into the slip.

Clancy and myself both jumped to stop him, but we weren't quick enough. They were gone—the whole beautiful necklace. The skipper fixed his eyes on where they had struck the water. Then he turned and left the office. At the door he stopped and said: "I don't know—maybe I won't take the Johnnie next trip, and if I don't, Tommie,

I hope you'll take her—Mr. Duncan will let you have her if you want. I hope you'll take her anyway, for you know what a vessel she is. You'll take care of her—" and went and left us.

Clancy swore to himself for a while. He hadn't quite done when the door of the rear office opened and Miss Foster herself came out. She greeted me sweetly—she always did—but was going out without paying any attention to Clancy. She looked pale—although perhaps I would not have noticed her paleness particularly only for what had just happened.

I was surprised to see then what Clancy did. Before she had got to the door he was beside her.

"Miss Foster, Miss Foster," he said, and his tone was so different from what I had ever heard from him before that I could hardly believe it. He was a big man, it must be remembered, and still on him were the double-banked oilskins and heavy jack-boots he wore through the race. Also his face was flushed from the excitement of the day—the salt water was not yet dry on him and his eyes were shining, shining not alone with the glow of a man who had been lashed to a wheel steering a vessel in a gale—and, too, to victory—for hours, and not alone with the light that comes from two or three quarts of champagne—it was something

more than that. Whatever it was it surprised me and held Alice Foster's attention.

"Mister Clancy," she said, and turned to him.

"Yes, Mister Clancy—or Tommie Clancy—or Captain Clancy, as it is at times—master of an odd vessel now and again—but Clancy all the time—just Clancy, good-for-nothing Clancy—hard drinker—reveller—night-owl—disturber of the peace—at best only a fisherman who'll by and by go out and get lost like thousands of the other fishermen before him—as a hundred every year do now and have three lines in the paper—name, age, birthplace, street and number of his boarding-house, and that will be the end of it. But that don't matter—Tommie Clancy, whatever he is, is a friend of Maurice Blake's. And he means to speak a word for Maurice.

"For a long time now, Miss Foster, Maurice has thought the world of you. He never told me—he never told anybody. But I know him. He waited a long time, I'm sure, before he even told himself—maybe even before he knew it himself. But I knew it—bunk-mates, watch-mates, dory-mates we've been. He's master of a fine vessel now and I'm one of his crew. He's gone ahead and I've stayed behind. Why? Because he's carried in his heart the picture of a girl he thought could be all a woman ought to be to a man. And that was well.

A man like Maurice needs that, and maybe—maybe —you're all that he thought and more maybe, Miss Foster. Wait—he had that picture before his eyes all the time. I hadn't any picture. Years ago, when I was Maurice's age, I might have had something like it, and now look at me. And why? Why, Miss Foster, you're a woman—could you guess? No? Think. What's running in a man's head, do you think, in the long winter nights when he's walking the deck, with the high heavens above and the great, black rolling sea around him? What's in his head when, trawls hauled and his fish aboard, when the danger and the hard work are mostly by, his vessel's going to the west'ard? What when he's an hour to rest and he's lying, smoking and thinking, in his bunk? What's been in Maurice's head and in his heart all the years he's loafed with the likes of me and yet never fell to my level? Anything he ever read anywhere, do you think, or was it a warm image that every time he came ashore and was lucky enough to get a look at you he could see was true to the woman it stood for? When you had no more idea of it than what was going on at the North Pole he was watching you—and thinking of you. Always thinking of you, Miss Foster. He never thought he had a chance. I know him. Who asks a woman like you to share a fisherman's life? Is it

a man like Maurice? Sometimes—maybe with the blood racing through him after a great race he might. A while ago he did, Miss Foster. And what gave him the courage?

"Listen to me now, Miss Foster, and say what you please afterward. Maurice and I are friends. Friends. I've been with him on the bottom of a capsized dory when we both expected we'd hauled our last trawl—with the seas washing over us and we both getting weak and him getting black in the face—and maybe I was, too. I told you this once before, but let me tell it again. 'Come and take the plug strap, Tommie,' he says to me. 'Come and take the plug strap.' Do you know what that means, Miss Foster?—and the seas sweeping over you and your whole body getting numb? And I've been with him four days and four nights—astray in the fog of the Western Banks in winter, and, for all we knew and believed, we were gone. In times like those men get to know each other, and I tell you, Miss Foster—" Clancy choked and stopped. "To-day he sailed a race the like of which was never sailed before. A dozen times he took the chance of himself going over the rail. And why? The better to keep an eye on things and help his vessel along? Yes. But why that? For that cup we've drowned a dozen times in wine to-day? He never looked

twice at it when he got ashore. He hasn't seen it since he handed it to me on the dock. The boys might like to look at it, he said. He's forgot he ever won it by now. He let us take it up to a rum-shop and drink out of it the same as if it was a tin-pail—the beautiful gold and silver cup—engraved. We used it for a growler for all Maurice cared for the value of it, and there's forty men walking the streets now that's got a list they got out of that cup. We might have lost it, battered each other's drunken heads in with it, and he wouldn't have said a dozen words about it. But there was a necklace of pearls, and he thought you'd like them. 'To you, Maurice, for winning the race,' says Mr. Duncan, 'for winning the race,' and hands Maurice the pearls—your own guardian, Miss Foster, and most crazy, he was that pleased. And that's what Maurice ran up to get when the race was over—there was something a girl might like, or thought so. And then what? On the way down a woman that I know—that you know—tried to hold him up. Kissed him before a hundred people—she knew you were waiting—she knew, trust a woman—and walked down part way with him, because you were looking. And he being a man, and weak, and only twenty-six—and the racing blood still running through him—maybe forgot himself for five minutes—not knowing you

were within a mile. That doesn't excuse him? No, you're right, it don't. But he, poor boy, knowing nothing—what does a boy of twenty-six know?—knowing nothing—suspecting nothing—and yet, if he forgot himself, he never really forgot you. He hurries on to you and offers you the necklace that he risked his life to get. And you—what did you say?"

"What did I say? I told him that perhaps he knew somebody that he'd rather give it to before me——"

"Before you? There's a woman. You're not satisfied when a man fights all the devil in himself for you, but you must rub it into him while he's doing it. Maurice—or maybe you don't understand. You could say things like that to a dog—if a dog could understand—and he'd come back and lick your hand. Maurice has blood and fire in him. And here's a woman—whatever else she is—is warm-blooded too. She wants Maurice, and, by God, she'll get him if you keep on. Do you remember the night of the Master Mariners' ball—the night before we sailed on the Southern cruise? Well, that night this woman, she waits for Maurice and stops him on his way home. But she didn't get him. He was up in the wind for a minute or two, but one spoke of the wheel and he found his head again. Again last June in Newport on a

warm summer's night—flowers, music, wine—the cabin of a beautiful yacht—she asks him to wait over a day or two in Newport harbor. Does he? Does he? Not Maurice. With never a touch of the wheel, off he swings and drives for home. And why didn't he stay? Why, do you suppose? Didn't he tell you a while ago? Good God! Look here—you're no fool. Look at me—ten years ago I was another Maurice. And this woman—I tell you she knows men. She don't care whether a man is rich or poor, tall or short, thin or fat, so long as she likes him. And I tell you she loves Maurice—as well as she can love—and she's not a good enough woman—there it is. And they're all saying you're likely to marry Withrow. Wait now. Withrow, I'm telling you, isn't fit to wash the gurry off Maurice's jack-boots. I'm a careless man, Miss Foster, and in my life I've done things I wish now I hadn't, but I draw the line above the head of a man like Withrow. Whatever I am, I'm too good to be company for Fred Withrow. And on top of all that he's so carried away with this other woman—this same woman—and she caring more for Maurice's eyelash than Withrow's whole two hundred and ten pounds—Withrow is so carried away with her that he is ready to elope with her—elope with her! I know that—never mind how. Bring Withrow and me together, and

I'll tell him—tell him, yes, and throw him through the door afterward if he denies it. This woman is enough of a woman to want Maurice—Maurice with nothing at all—before Withrow with all he's got and all he can get her or give her—and she's clever enough to come pretty near getting what she wants. And now, Miss Foster, suppose you think it over. I'm going to hunt up Maurice, though I'm not too sure we'll find him in a hurry. Good-by."

He swept his sou'wester wide to her and went out the door. I said good-by without looking at her. I was too ashamed—and went after Clancy. But I think she was crying to herself as I went out.

XXXVI

MAURICE BLAKE IS RECALLED

THE morning after the race I was eating breakfast at home and I could not remember when I enjoyed a meal like that one. I had had a fine long sleep and the sleep that comes to a man after he's been through a long and exciting experience does make him feel like a world-beater. I felt that I could go out and about leap the length of a seine-boat or rip up a plank sidewalk. It was worth while to be alive, and everything tasted so good.

I had put away six fried eggs and about fourteen of those little slices of bacon before I even thought of slacking up (with my mother piling them up as fast as I lifted them off)—and maybe I wouldn't have slacked then only my cousin Nell came skipping in.

She kissed my mother half a dozen times, and danced around the room. "Four vessels off the Johnnie Duncan's model have already been ordered. Four, auntie—four. There will be a fleet of them yet, you'll see. And how are you, Joe?"

"Fine," I said, and kept on eating.

Nell didn't like my not noticing how glad she was feeling, I suppose, for all at once, as I was about to sugar another cup of coffee, she ran her hands through my hair and yanked till I couldn't pretend any longer.

"There, now, with your mind off your stomach, perhaps you'll look up and converse when a lady deigns to notice you. How much money did Mr. Withrow lose on the race?"

"I don't know, but it was a good pile; I know that."

"And how much did Mr. Duncan win?"

"I don't know that, either; but I hope it was a good roll, for he won about all Withrow lost."

"M-m—but aren't you in love with your old employer? But let's not mind common money matters. What do you think of the Johnnie Duncan for a vessel?"

"She's a dog—a dog."

"Isn't she! And the fastest, able-est and the handsomest vessel that ever sailed past Eastern Point, isn't she?"

"That's what she is."

"And who designed her?"

"Who? Let me see. Oh, yes, some local man."

"You don't know! Look up here. Who designed her!"

"Oh, yes. 'Twas a Gloucester man."

"A Gloucester man? Look up again. Now—who—de—signed—the—John—nie — Dun — can!"

"Ouch, yes. A ver-y fine and a-ble—and handsome gen-tle-man—a wonderful man."

"That's a little better. And his name?"

"William Somers—William the Illustrious—William the First—'First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of Gloucestermen'—and if you let me stand up, I'll do a break-down to show you how glad I am."

"Now you're showing something like appreciation. And now where do you suppose your friend Clancy is and your skipper?"

"Clancy? Lord knows. Maybe in a circle of admiring friends, singing whatever is his latest. 'Hove flat down' was the last I heard. If it was earlier in the day—about three in the morning—it would be pretty sure to be that."

"What a pity, and he such a fine man otherwise!"

"What's a pity?"

"Why, his getting drunk, as I hear he does very often."

"Gets drunk? Who gets drunk? Clancy? That's news to me. As long as I've known him I never saw him drunk yet. He gets mellow and loose—but drunk! Clancy drunk? Why, Nell!"

"Oh, well, all right, he's an apostle of temperance then. But Captain Blake—where is he?"

"I couldn't say—why?"

"I have a message for him."

"Did you try his boarding-house?"

"Yes. That is, Will did, and he wasn't there, hadn't been there at all, they said, since the afternoon before."

"That so? Where else did you try? Duncan's office?"

"We did, and no word of him there."

"Try Clancy's boarding-house?"

"Yes, and no word."

"Try—h-m—the Anchorage?"

"Oh, Joe, you don't think he's been loafing there since?"

"No, I don't. And yet after the way he got turned down yesterday, you know—there's no telling what a man might do."

"Well, Will looked in there, too."

"You fat little fox! Why didn't you say that at first? And no word?"

"No."

"Well, I don't know where he'd be then."

"Nor I, except—did you notice the wind has hauled to the northwest?"

"I did."

"Well. Do you know that old vessel that Mr.

Withrow's been trying to get a crew for—the Flamingo?"

"M-h-h."

"Well, this morning early she went out—on a hand-lining trip to the east'ard, it is said. And Will says that he thinks—he doesn't know, mind you, because they won't tell him anything down to Withrow's—but he thinks that Maurice Blake's shipped in her."

"Wow! She won't last out one good breeze on the Banks."

"That is just what Will said. And it's too bad, for I had a message for him—a message that would make everything all right. I suppose you can guess?"

"Guess? H-m-m— I don't know as I want to."

"Well, don't get mad about it, anyway. How would you feel if you saw that horrid Minnie Arkell rush up and— Oh, you know what I mean. However, I've been pleading with Alice since yesterday afternoon. For two hours I was up in her room last evening, and poor Will walking the veranda down below. I put Captain Blake's case as I thought a friend of his would put it—as you would put it, say—perhaps better in some ways—for I could not forget that he sailed the Johnnie Duncan yesterday, and her winning meant so much

to Will. Yes, and I'm not forgetting Clancy and the rest of her crew—indeed, I'm not—I felt as though I could kiss every one of them."

"Well, here's one of them."

"Don't get saucy because your mother is standing by. Go and find Maurice Blake. Go ahead, won't you, Joe? Tell him that everything is all right. She is proud."

"That's a nice sounding word for it—pride. Stuck on herself is what I'd say."

"No, she isn't. You must allow a woman self-respect, you know."

"I guess so. And it must be her long suit, seeing she's always leading from it."

"Oh, keep your fishermen's jokes for the mugging-up times on your vessel. You go and get Maurice Blake—or find Mr. Clancy and have him get him—if he hasn't gone on the Flamingo."

So I went out. On a cruise along the water front I found a whole lot of people. I saw Wesley Marrs and Tommie Ohlsen—sorrowful and neither saying much—looking after their vessels—Ohlsen seeing to a new gaff. "I ought to've lost," said Ohlsen. "Look at that for a rotten piece of wood." Sam Hollis was around, too, trying to explain how it was he didn't win the race. But he couldn't explain to anybody's satisfaction how his stays'l went nor why he hove-to when that squall struck him—

the same squall that shot the Johnnie Duncan across the line. Tom O'Donnell was there, looking down on the deck of the vessel in which he took so much pride. "Two holes in her deck where her spars ought to be," he was saying when I came along. I asked him if he had seen Maurice that morning, and it was from him I learned for certain that Maurice had shipped on the Flamingo. "I didn't see her leaving, boy, but Withrow himself told me this morning. 'And I hope he'll never come back,' he said at the same time. ' 'Tis you that takes a licking hard. But maybe 'tis the insurance,' I says. 'If that's what you're thinking,' says he, 'she isn't insured.' 'Then it must be the divil's own repair she's in when no company at all will insure her,' I says. Sure, we had hard words over it, but that won't bring back Maurice—he's gone in the Flamingo, Joe."

I went after Clancy then, and after a long chase, that took me to Boston and back, I caught up with him. He was full of repentance and was gloomy. It was up in his boarding-house—in his room. He, looking tired, was thinking of taking a kink of sleep.

"Hulloh, Joe! And I don't wonder you look surprised, Joe. I must be getting old. Thursday morning I got up after as fine a night's sleep as a man'd want. That was Thursday. Then Thurs-

day night, Friday, Friday night, Saturday—two nights and three days, and I'm sleepy already. Sleepy, Joe, and I remember the time I could go a whole week, and then, after a good night's sleep, wake up fine and daisy and be ready for another week. Joe, there's a moral in that if you can only work it out."

Clancy stayed silent after that, not inclined to talk, I could see, until I told him about Maurice having shipped in the Flamingo and the hard crew that had gone in her.

That stirred him. "Great Lord, gone in that shoe-box! Why, Joe, I'd as soon put to sea in a market basket calked with butter. And the man that's got her—Dave Warner! He's crazy, Joe, if ever a man was crazy. Clean out of his head over a girl that he met in Gloucester once, but now living in Halifax, and she won't have anything to do with him. He's daffy over her. If she was drowning alongside you'd curse your luck because you had to gaff her in. That is, you would only she's a woman, of course. Wants to get lost, Joe, I believe—wants to! If this was Boston or New York and in older days, I'd say that Dave and Withrow must have shanghaied a crew to man the Flamingo's kind. But you c'n get men here to go in anything sometimes. Wait a bit and I'll be along with you. We'll see old Duncan and maybe we c'n head the Flamingo off."

XXXVII

THE GIRL IN CANSO

THAT was Saturday evening. The crew of the Johnnie had been told just after the race by the skipper that he would not need them again until Monday. Scattering on that, some going to Boston, they could not be got together again until Monday morning, and it was not until Monday noon that we got away.

We fitted out as though for a Cape Shore seining trip, and that's what we were to do in case we missed the Flamingo or could not persuade her skipper or Maurice himself that he ought to leave her and come back on the Johnnie Duncan. It was Clancy who had the matter in charge. Indeed, it was only Clancy who knew what it was really all about.

We had a good run-off before a stiff westerly that gradually hauled to the north, and Tuesday night late saw us in Halifax Harbor. It was too late to do anything that night, but Clancy went ashore to find out what he could. Before sunrise he was back with word to break out the anchor and put to sea. He had word of the Flamingo.

"That girl of Dave's—it seems she's moved to Canso with her folks, and Dave's gone there. He's probably there before this—maybe left again. She's an old plug, the Flamingo, but she ought've made Canso before this. He only stayed a few hours here and left Monday."

It was bang, bang, bang all the way to Canso, with Clancy swearing at Withrow and the Flamingo and Dave Warner and the girl in the case —one after the other and sometimes all together. "Blast Withrow and that crazy fool Dave Warner, too. And why in the devil couldn't her folks stayed in Gloucester—or in Halifax, at least. They ought've put a few sticks of dynamite in her and blown her to pieces ages ago. She's forty years old if she's a day—her old planks rotten. They won't keep her afloat overnight if they're out in this. Why d'y's'pose people leave a good lively little city like Halifax to go to a place like Canso? Why?"

Andie Howe happened to be within hearing, and "Maybe the rent's cheaper," suggested Andie.

"Maybe it is—and maybe if you don't talk sense I'll heave you over the rail some fine day. Better give her a grain more fore-sheet. Man, but it's a wicked night."

We made Canso after the worst day and night we had had in the Johnnie Duncan since she was

launched. Outside Canso Harbor it looked bad. We didn't think the skipper would try to enter the harbor that black night, but he did. "Got to go in and get news," said Clancy, and in we went. It was as black as could be—squalls sweeping down—and Canso is not the easiest harbor in the world to make at night.

I went ashore with Clancy to hear what the young woman might have to say. We found her in a place run by her father, a sort of lodging house and "pub," with herself serving behind the bar—a bold-looking young woman, not over-neat—and yet attractive in her way—good figure, regular features, and good color. "There, Joe, if you brought a girl like that home your mother would probably die of a broken heart, but there's the kind that a foolish man like Dave Warner would sell his soul for." Then Clancy explained while we were waiting for her to see us privately, "I don't know if she'll remember me, but I met her two or three times in Gloucester."

When she came in she recognized Clancy right away. "How do you do, Captain Clancy?"

"How do you do, Miss Luce? My friend, Mr. Buckley. Now what we've come for—but first, suppose we have a little something by way of sociability. A little fizzy stuff, say, and some good cigars, Miss Luce."

She brought the wine and the cigars. Clancy pulled the cork, filled both glasses, pushed one glass toward the young woman and drew one to himself.

"But, Captain, your friend hasn't any."

"My friend," said Clancy, "doesn't drink. The last thing the doctor said to him before we came away was, 'Don't touch a drop of liquor or your life will pay the forfeit.' You see, Miss Luce, he's been a dissipated youth—drink—and having been dissipated and coming of delicate people, it's affected his health."

"You don't tell me? I'm sure he doesn't look it."

"No, he don't—that's a fact. But so it is."

"Stomach?" she asked me.

"No—heart," answered Clancy for me. "What they call an aneurism. You know what an aneurism is, of course?"

"Yes-yes—oh, yes——"

"Of course. Well, he's got one of them."

"That's too bad. So he only smokes instead?"

"That's all. Here, Joe, smoke up."

"My, I always thought smoking was bad for the heart."

"It is—for everything except aneurisms. Smoking's the death of aneurisms. Have another cigar, Joe. And Miss Luce, shall we exchange a health?"

"But I never drank anything in all my life."

"Of course not. But you will now, won't you? Consider the occasion and I'm sure you won't let me drink alone. And I've come so far to see you, too—only of course not— Well, here's to your good health, and may you live long and——"

The rest of it was smothered in the gurgle. And nobody would ever think to see the way she put down hers that Miss Luce had never had a drink of wine before.

"And now, Miss Luce, may I ask how long it has been since your friend Dave Warner left——"

"Oh-h— Dave Warner? He's no friend of mine."

"Isn't he? Well, he's no particular friend of mine, either. But a friend of mine—of both of us, Joe here, too—is with Dave—Maurice Blake. Any word of him?"

"Oh, yes. A good-looking fellow, nice eyes and hair and nice manners. I do like to see refined manners in people. Now if it was him——"

"If it was him, you wouldn't have told him to go to sea and the devil take him——"

"I'd have you know, Captain Clancy, I don't swear."

"Swear? You, Miss Luce? Dear me, whatever made you think I thought that? But let's

have another taste of wine. But of course you didn't encourage Dave to stay ashore here?"

"Him?—I guess not. When he said he didn't care if he never came back, I told him I was sure I didn't—and out he went."

"O woman, gentle woman," murmured Clancy in his glass, "especially real ladies. But Dave never did know how to talk to a lady."

"I should say he didn't."

"No, not Dave. And so his money gone he's——"

"Money? Why, he never had any money."

"Well, that's bad. Not even enough to open a bottle of wine to drink a lady's health?"

"Bottle of wine? No, nor a thimbleful of tuppenny ale."

"That was bad, Miss Luce. Dave ought've come better heeled——

> 'And so his money gone he puts out to sea—
> It may happen to you or happen to me.'

And which way did he say he was going?"

"He didn't say and I didn't ask, though one of the men with him said something about going to the Grand Banks."

"Grand Banks, eh? That's comforting—it isn't more than a couple of days' sail from here to the nearest edge of it, and twenty-odd thousand or more square miles of shoal water to hunt over

after you get there. Had they taken their bait aboard, did you hear, Miss Luce?"

"Yes, they had. That was yesterday afternoon late. His vessel was leaking then, I heard him say to that nice-looking man—Maurice Blake his name, did you say? A nice name Maurice, isn't it? Well, he said to Maurice going out the door, 'Well, we'll put out and I callate—I don't know how she'll get out but out we'll go to-night.' 'The sooner you go the better it will suit me,' Blake said, and they went off together."

"And how was Mr. Blake?"

"How do you mean? How did he act? My, I never saw such a man. Wouldn't open his head all night—wouldn't drink, but just sat and smoked like your friend there. Anything the matter with him?"

"With Maurice? Oh, in the way of aneurisms? Not that I know of. Oh, yes, he has heart-trouble too, come to think. But I must be getting back to the vessel."

"So soon?"

"Yes, we've got to go to sea. I'm like Dave Warner in that I'm going to sea too."

"But nobody's driving you away." She had her eyes on Clancy's face then.

He didn't look up—only stared into his glass.

She was silent for a full minute. Clancy said

nothing. "Nobody's driving you away," she said again.

At that Clancy looked at her. "There's no telling," he said at first, and then hastily, "Oh, no—of course nobody's driving me to sea."

"Then what's your hurry?"

I got up and went to the door then. I heard the sound of a scraping chair and then of Clancy standing up. A moment's quiet and then it was: "No, dear, I can't stay—nobody's driving me away, I know that. I'm sure you wouldn't—not with your heart. And you've a good heart if you'd only give it a chance. But I can't stay."

"And why not? You won't, you mean. Well, I never thought you were *that* kind of a man."

"No? Well, don't go to giving me any moral rating. Don't go to over-rating me—or maybe you'd call it under-rating. But you see, it's my friend that's calling."

"And you're going out in this gale?"

"Gale. I'd go if it was a hundred gales. Good-by—and take care of yourself, dear."

"And will you come back if you don't find him?"

"Lord, Lord, how can I say? Can anybody say who's coming back and who isn't?"

He went by me and out the door. She looked after him, but he never turned—only plunged out of the house and into the street and I right after him.

XXXVIII

THE DUNCAN GOES TO THE WEST'ARD

GETTING back to the vessel Clancy was pretty gloomy. "That's settled. We can't chase them as far to the east'ard as the big banks—a three hundred mile run to the nearest edge of it and tens of thousands of square miles to hunt over after we'd got there. And it would be child's work anyway to ask Maurice to leave her on the bank. Who'd take his place even if Dave would stand for it? 'Twould mean laying up a dory or taking his dory-mate too. Maurice wouldn't leave her anyway, even if he believed he'd never get home—no real fisherman would. And yet there it is—Dave in a devil of a mood, and a vessel according to all reports that won't live out one good easterly. And there's a crazy crew aboard her that won't make for the most careful handling of a vessel. Oh, Lord, I don't see anything for it, but, thank the Lord, Maurice has been behaving himself—and that in spite of how blue he must have been feeling. By this time he's cert'nly made up his mind he's with a pretty bad crowd, but maybe he's glad of a

little excitement. What I don't understand is how Dave ever left old man Luce's place without breaking up the furniture before going away. Gen'rally that's his style. Maybe Maurice being along had something to do with it—a pretty able man in close quarters is Maurice. Yes, he must be glad of the excitement, but Lord, that won't save him from being lost. Oh, oh, and now what'll we do? Let's see, the Flamingo's on the way to the Banks, and that's the end of that chase. We've got to wait now and see that she comes home—or don't come home—one or the other. I told that girl that I was going to put out—put out if it blew a hundred gales. And so I would if any good would come of it, but putting out to sea a day like this because you bragged you would—risking your vessel and crew, or making hard work for them if nothing else—that ain't good sense, is it? Besides, I had to tell her something to get away without setting up to be a model of virtue. What else could I do? Women are the devil—sometimes—aren't they, Joe? There's some are. I suppose it wouldn't do any great harm to head her for home. I don't believe there's going to be much more fish going to be seined this fall—and wouldn't she make a passage of it in this easterly? Oh, Lord, it would be the race all over again, only ten times as long a drag."

While he sat there in the cabin, smoking and meditating, letting us into his thoughts every now and then, the voices of some of our crew were heard on deck.

We all went up and got the word that was being passed around. A coast steamer had just come to anchor in the harbor with the report that just outside—about ten miles to the west'ard—was a vessel, dismasted and clean-swept, and dragging toward the rocks. They could not help her themselves—too rough—a hurricane outside—to launch a boat was out of the question. They didn't mind taking a chance, they said, but to attempt her rescue would be suicide.

It looked like a pretty hard chance going out in that gale, but Clancy didn't wait. "Nobody else seems to be hurrying to get out, and we being the able-est looking craft in the harbor, I callate it's up to us to go." He got the exact location of the distressed vessel from the coaster, and then it was up anchor, make sail, and out we went.

There were people who called Clancy a fool for ordering out his vessel and risking his crew that day—men in that very harbor—and maybe he was. But for myself, I want that kind of a fool for my skipper. The man that will take a chance for a stranger will take a bigger chance for his own by and by.

We saw her while we were yet miles away, down to the west'ard—near Whitehead and with the cruel stretch of rocks under her lee quarter. Even with plenty of sea-room she could not have lasted long, and here with these ledges to catch her she looked to be in for a short shrift. We had a good chance to get a look at her as we bore down. Everything was gone from her deck, even the house and rail. There was not as much loose wood on deck as would make a tooth-pick. Afterwards we learned that two seas hove her down so that they had to cut the spars away to right her, and then just as she was coming up another monster had caught her and swept her clean—not only swept clean, but stove in her planks and started some of her beams so that she began to leak in a fashion that four men to the pumps could just manage to keep up with.

We could just see them—the men to the pumps working desperately—with the others lashed to the stumps of the masts and the stanchions which were left when the rail went. Her big hawser had parted and her chain was only serving to slightly check her way toward the rocks.

With spars and deck gear gone and her hull deep in the water, a vessel is not so easily distinguished. But there was something familiar in this one. We had seen her before. All at once it

flashed on half a dozen of us—"the Flamingo!" we said. "God! that's luck!" said Clancy.

She lay in a sort of inlet that was wide open to the gale, rocks on the better part of three sides of her, north, south and west. She was then within all but striking distance of the rocks, and the seas, high and wicked, were sweeping over her. It looked like a bad place to work out of if we should get close in, but Clancy held on.

"Not much lee-room, but plenty of water under her keel anyway," and himself to the wheel, sailed the Johnnie around the Flamingo. He hailed Maurice as he went by, waved his hand to the others, and hove a line aboard. They took the line, hauled in the hawser at the end of it, made that fast to the windlass, and then we started off with her in tow.

We were doing pretty well, what with plenty of wind and the Johnnie buckling down to her work like she was a steamer, till the hawser parted and back toward the rocks went the Flamingo again.

"No use," said Clancy, "sea's too much for any line we got. We'll try it with the seine-boat. Who'll go in the seine-boat and try to take them off? Think quick, but mind what it means."

Every man of the crew of the Johnnie Duncan said, "Here!" The cook even came out of the forec's'le and put in his "And me, too, skipper."

"You're good men," said Clancy,—"damn good men," and looked us up and down. We felt proud, he said it in such a way. "But you're taking your lives in your hands and some of you got wives and children—mothers or something. Who hasn't anybody depending on him? Which of you hasn't any woman somewhere, or little brothers or sisters?"

About twelve of the sixteen men standing on the deck of the Johnnie Duncan said "Me!"

"Three-quarters of you, at least," said Clancy, "are damn liars. Over with the seine-boat and be careful nobody gets hurt."

Somebody did get hurt, though. Andie Howe got his foot smashed and was helped below. Clancy gave the rest of us a scolding in advance. "You're not hurt yet, but some of you will be—like Andie—if you don't watch out. You'd think that some of you were out on some little pond up in the country somewhere launching a canoe off one of those club-house floats. Keep an eye out for those seas when they board. And watch out for that foreboom or some of you'll have a head cut off. A man killed or a man washed over the rail—what's the difference—it's a man lost. Look out now—watch, you Steve—damn you, watch out! Over with it!"

And over it went and with it leaped two men

before it could sag away, while the rest of us stood by the rail watching our chance.

"Nelson," called Clancy, "come away from that rail! Steve, come away!—come away, I say, and no back talk. Pat, you can go—jump in—watch your chance or it's the last of you. Eddie, you can go, and you Bill, and you Frenchy. Joe! stand away from that rail or I'll put you in the hold and batten the hatches on you. Now, that's better. And that's enough—six men to the oars and one to steer."

"And who'll steer?" asked somebody.

"You'll know in a minute," said Clancy, and he leaped for the seine-boat and made it, and grabbed the steering oar. "Stand by—push off! Fend off in the vessel there! Steve, if anything happens—you know—you're to take the Johnnie home. Give way, fellows. Now! Watch out!—now — now then, around with her — end on, and there she is like a bird! And now drive her!"

"A bird!" said Clancy—but a wild-looking bird—fifty feet she looked to be going into the air one moment and down out of sight the next, and water slamming aboard her so that we thought she was swamped half a dozen times. Two had to leave the oars and go to bailing, while Clancy with an arm and shoulders and back and swinging

waist like—well, like nothing a man ever had before—kept her end to it.

"Good luck!" we called.

"Never fear—we'll bring 'em back!" said Clancy.

"Or stay with them," we thought.

But he didn't stay with them. It was a ticklish job, but Clancy got away with it. He didn't dare to go too near the Flamingo, for that meant that the seas would pitch the seine-boat up and dash it to kindling wood against her hull. What he did do was to go as near the Flamingo as he could and keep her clear, then heave a line aboard and call to her crew one after the other to make it fast around themselves and jump overboard. It took some nerve to make that jump—from the rigging of the Duncan we watched them—saw them shiver and draw up—these were men accustomed to face danger—reckless men—but the shiver was over in a breath, and then over the rail and into that sea—a game fight—and they were hauled into the seine-boat. Some of them we thought would never make it, for it was an awful sea.

As fast as one of the Flamingo's men made the seine-boat he was set to work bailing out or taking a haul at the oars, for it was a difficult matter in that sea to keep the seine-boat at the right distance from the Flamingo. But they got them all—ten

of them. Two were hauled in unconscious, but came to after awhile.

To get aboard the Johnnie again was almost as bad as to get into the seine-boat from the Flamingo. But we managed it. Long Steve was swept over while we were at it, but we got him back with the help of Maurice Blake and another of the Flamingo's crowd. By smart clever work they grabbed Steve before he could go down and hauled him into the seine-boat.

When they were all safe aboard the Duncan Clancy shook hands with Maurice. "I call that luck, Maurice—to come out to save a stranger and find you've saved your own. And now whose trick to the wheel—you, Joe? Put her on the off-shore tack till we're well clear of that headland—maybe we c'n make it in one leg. No? Then a short tack and have an eye out for the ledges—not too close. And Maurice, go below—you and Dave and all hands of you, and we'll get out dry clothes for you. Man, but you must be cold and hungry, but the cook's getting coffee and grub ready. And for the Duncan's crew—on deck all hands and put the tops'ls to her. For, Maurice-boy, we're going home—going home, Maurice—where there's people waiting for you. Hang on a while longer, Joe, and I'll take her myself."

No need to tell me to hang on. If I hadn't hung

on or been lashed to the wheel I could never have kept my feet, for at this time it was so bad that they had passed a line from my waist to the windward bitt and I was up to my waist with every dive of her.

"Lord, she's a dog, ain't she! If old man Duncan could see her now! Remember Tom O'Donnell singing that song the other night:

'West half-no'the and drive her—we're abreast now of Cape Sable—
'Tis an everlasting hurricane, but here's the craft that's able.'

We're not abreast of Cape Sable yet, but it won't take us too many hours at this clip. And here's the craft that's able. Man, wouldn't it be fine if Tom O'Donnell himself was with us and the pair of us racing home? Let me take the wheel, Joe. And go for'ard and have a mug-up for yourself—and have a care going, Joe, for it's leaping she is now and seas that'd lift you a cable's length to looard if ever they caught you fair. That's it—oh, but if your mother could see you now, Joe, it's never to sea you'd come again."

I made my way for'ard. A dash between the house and windward rail, a shoot for the mainmast and holding on there for awhile. Another dive for the gripes on the dories, another shoot between rail and dories, a grip of the bow gripes, a swing

around and I was at the forec's'le hatch. Here I thought I heard him call and looked aft.

He had a leg either side of the wheel, standing full height and sawing the spokes a bit up and down to get the feel of her. The life line was trailing from his waist to the bitt—the clear white sea was up to his middle and racing over the taff-rail. He had cast away his mitts the better to grip the spokes, and even as I looked he took off his sou'wester and sent it scaling. The wind taking hold of it must have carried it a quarter a mile to leeward. Watching it go, himself looking out under the boom, he laughed—laughed—such a roar of a laugh—stamped his feet and began to sing:

"Oh, I love old Ocean's smile,
I love old Ocean's frowning—
My love's for Ocean all the while,
My prayer's for death by drowning."

The devil was in him then. "Did you call me, skipper?" I sang out.

"Did I? Did I? Lord, Joe, I don't know. Maybe I did. I feel like calling from here to Gloucester, and if I did I bet they'd hear me. God, Joe, but it's good to be alive, isn't it?—just to be alive. Whew! but I wish I had a few more sou'westers—just to see 'em scale. But what was it I wanted—but is the cook there?"

"He is—I c'n hear him talking."

Then go below and tell him, Joe—tell him to mouse his pots and kettles, for with sail alow and sail aloft, with her helmsman lashed and her house awash, in a living gale and the devil's own sea, the Johnnie Duncan's going to the west'ard."

And she certainly went.

XXXIX

THE HEART OF CLANCY

THAT trip ended seining for the Duncan that year. Everything went well with our friends, after we got home. It was late in the season, and Maurice Blake was to stay ashore to get married, for one thing. He had made a great season of it and could afford to. So the Johnnie Duncan was fitted out for fresh halibuting and Clancy took her.

I went with him. I remember very well that I had no idea of going winter fishing when the seining season ended, but somehow or other when Clancy came to get a crew together I was looking for a chance.

So we put out, and on the rocks of Cape Ann, near Eastern Point lighthouse, on the day we sailed on our first halibuting trip, were Maurice Blake and Alice Foster, my cousin Nell and Will Somers, to wave us good luck. Clancy hauled the vessel close in to get a better look and they waved us until I suppose they could see us no longer. Of course they should have been able to make us out long

after we had lost sight of them, we being a tall-sparred, white-sailed vessel; and Clancy must have had that in mind, for long after all signs of them had been lost to us he kept the glasses pointed to the rocks. He turned at last with a "Well, I suppose they're all happy now, Joe?"

"They ought to be," I said.

"Yes, they ought to be," he repeated, and then again, "they ought to be," and went for'ard.

He stayed for'ard a long time, saying no word, but leaning over the windlass and looking out ahead. Nobody disturbed him. Once or twice when the sheets needed trimming—and in a deep sleep I think Clancy would know that—he turned and gave the word, but the bare word and no more. He had his spells we all knew, when he didn't want anybody near him, and so he wanted to be alone, I suppose. And there he stayed, with what spray came over the bow splashing him, but he paying no attention.

At supper call he moved, but not to go below and eat—only to shift to walking the quarter, and walking the quarter he stayed until near midnight. He went below then after giving a few words of instruction to the watch—went below and got out his pipe. From my bunk, the middle port bunk in the cabin, I watched him rummaging for tobacco in his stateroom and then his coming out with his

pipe and his filling and lighting it slowly and thoughtfully, and then his sitting and smoking under the cabin lamp.

Looking over when he had finished that pipeful —I had not drawn my curtain—he caught my eyes on him. He smiled, but said nothing—only lit another pipeful, and kept on smoking.

I fell asleep watching him—fell asleep and woke again. He must have been watching me, for his eyes were on mine when I looked for him again. He smiled and shook his pipe out, and made as though to turn in.

But he didn't turn in. He took off his jersey, loosened the collar of his flannel shirt, cast off his slip-shods—stopped—looked into his bunk, came back, filled and lit another pipeful and began to talk to me. I thought I was sleepy, but in five minutes I didn't think so. Joking, laughing, telling stories—in ten minutes he had me roaring. Before long he had everybody in the cabin awake and roaring, too. Men, coming off watch and into the cabin to warm up, or for one thing or another, listened and stayed. He kept that up all the rest of the night—until after six o'clock in the morning, and only the cook called to breakfast there's no telling when he would have stopped. And not until he was going for'ard to eat did I get a glimpse of what it was he had been thinking of during all

those earlier hours of the night. The sun, I remember, was streaking the sky ahead of us—he stopped just as he was about to drop into the forec's'le and pointed it out.

"A sunrise, Joe, on a fine October morning out to sea—beautiful—beautiful—but just one thing wrong about it. And what is it?—you don't see? Well, Joe, it's over the bow. A sunrise, Joe, is most beautiful when it's over the stern—and why? 'Cause then you're going home—of course. Going home, Joe—if you've got a home to go to. Look to it, Joe, that you've got a home of your own to go to before you're much older. Somebody to work for—somebody waiting for you—a wife, Joe—wife and children—or you're in for some awful lonesome times."

That was Clancy—watch-mate, bunk-mate, dory-mate once, and now my skipper—Clancy, who could be any man's friend, the man that everybody jumped to shake hands with, and yet never a bit of use to himself. And I couldn't but half wonder at that, and kept my eyes on him when, with one foot on the top step of the companionway, he turned and looked around again.

"And if you can't get anybody, skipper?"

"Then it's hard—though most likely you've deserved it."

"But you haven't deserved it?"

"Deserved it? Yes, and ten times over."

"That's pretty rough."

"Rough? No, it's right. When you do wrong you've got to make up for it. It's all in the big scheme of the universe. You've got to strike a balance some time—somewhere. And the sooner the better. Be thankful if you have to settle it right away, Joe. If you don't and it drags along—then it's worse again, and the Lord help those that come after you—those that have to take up life where you've left it off. The Lord have mercy on the heirs of your brain and heart and soul, boy. What you hand them they've got to take. Yes, sir, you'll pay for it somewhere—you yourself, or, what's worse, those you care for will have to pay—in this world or another—whatever it is we're coming to, a better or a worse world, it's there and waiting us. Be thankful, as I said, Joe, if you have to settle for it here—settle for it yourself alone."

All around, above and below, ahead and astern, he looked, a long, long look astern—his foot on the step, and singing softly, almost to himself:

"And if I come to you, my love,
And my heart free from guile,
Will you have a glance for me—
Will you on me smile?

Oh, Lord! pipe-dreams—pipe-dreams. Let's go below, Joe, and have a bite to eat."

So below we went; and her sails lit up by the morning sun, her decks wet by the slapping sea, sheets off and sailing free, the Johnnie Duncan clipped her way to the east'ard.

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